Paradise War
パラダイス大戦
3
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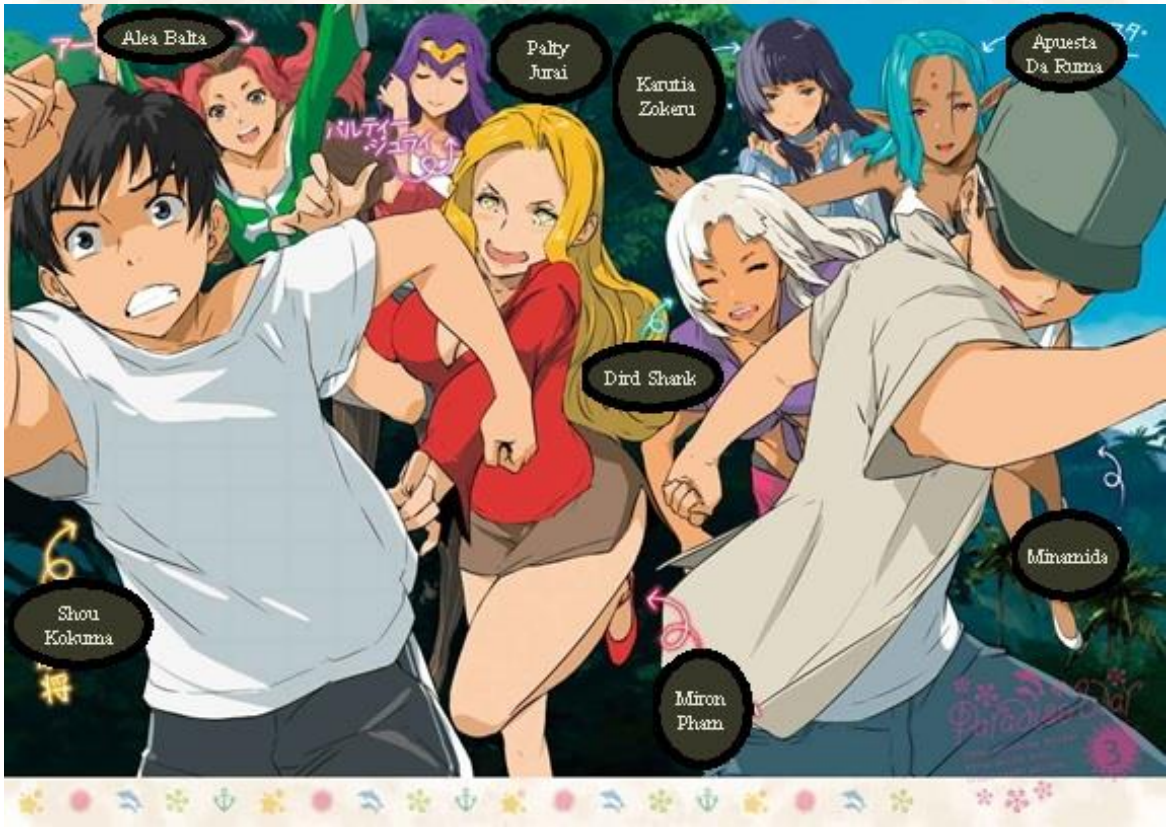
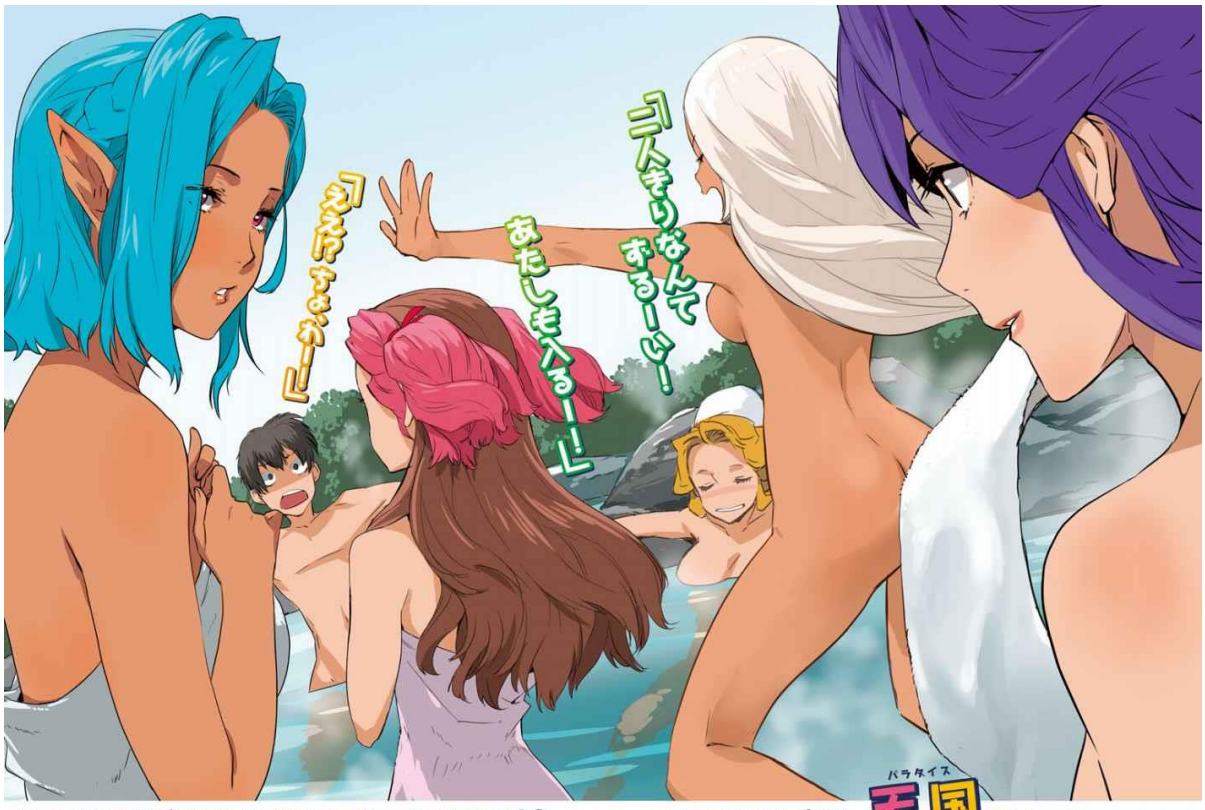
著：水樹尋
ill：エナミカツミ
講談社ラノベ文庫

Are you guys ready?
Let's do this!
The first round! The first
Battle of Banjo Island
Baseball Fist!
It's on!
MIRON PHAM

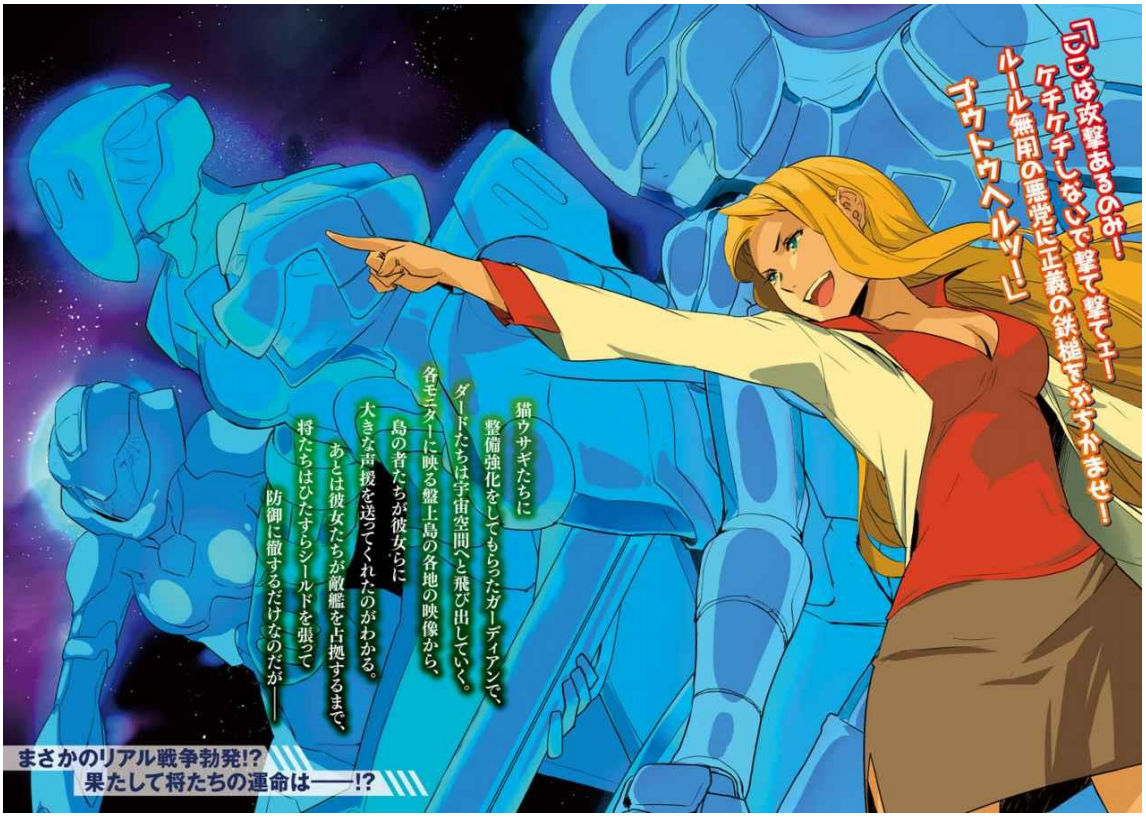
アーレア・バルタ
パルティー・ジュライ
カルティア・ゾケル
アプエスタ・ダ・ルマー
ダード・シャンク
南田
駆駒将
ミロン・ファム

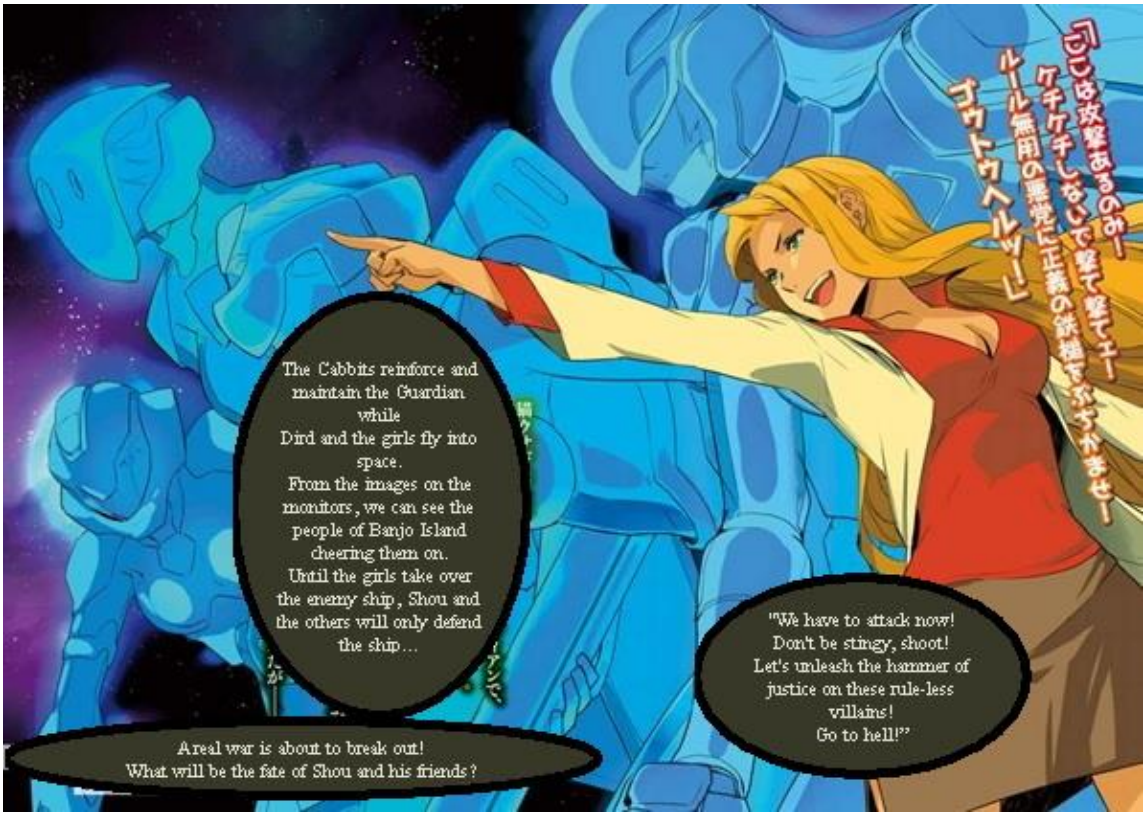

Alea Balta
Palty Jurai
Karutia Zokeru
Apuesta Da Fuma
Dird Shank
Minamida
Shou Kokuma
Miron Pham



みんなで温泉に入らないともったいない!?　ここもまた楽園、天国（パラダイス）であった――。

みんなで温泉に入ら　楽園、天国（パラダイス）であった――。


「ここは攻撃あるのみ！
ケチケチしないで撃て撃てェー
ルール無用の悪党に正義の鉄槌をぶちかませー
ゴウトウヘルッ！」
猫ウサギたちに
整備強化をしてもらったガーディアンで、
ダードたちは宇宙空間へと飛び出していく。
各モニターに映る盤上島の各地の映像から、
島の者たちが彼女らに
大きな声援を送ってくれたのがわかる。
あとは彼女たちが敵艦を占拠するまで、
将たちはひたすらシールドを張って
防御に徹するだけなのだが――
まさかのリアル戦争勃発!?
果たして将たちの運命は――!?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ケチケチしないで撃て撃てェー
ルール無用の悪党に正義の鉄槌をぶちかませー
ゴウトウヘルッ！」
The Cabbits reinforce and maintain the Guardian while
Dird and the girls fly into space.
From the images on the monitors, we can see the people of Banjo Island cheering them on.
Until the girls take over the enemy ship, Shou and the others will only defend the ship…
"We have to attack now!
Don't be stingy, shoot!
Let's unleash the hammer of justice on these rule-less villains!
Go to hell!"
A real war is about to break out!
What will be the fate of Shou and his friends?

Paradise War

STORY: KAJISHIMA MASAKI
NOVEL: MIZUKI HIRO
ILLUST: ENAMI KATSUMI

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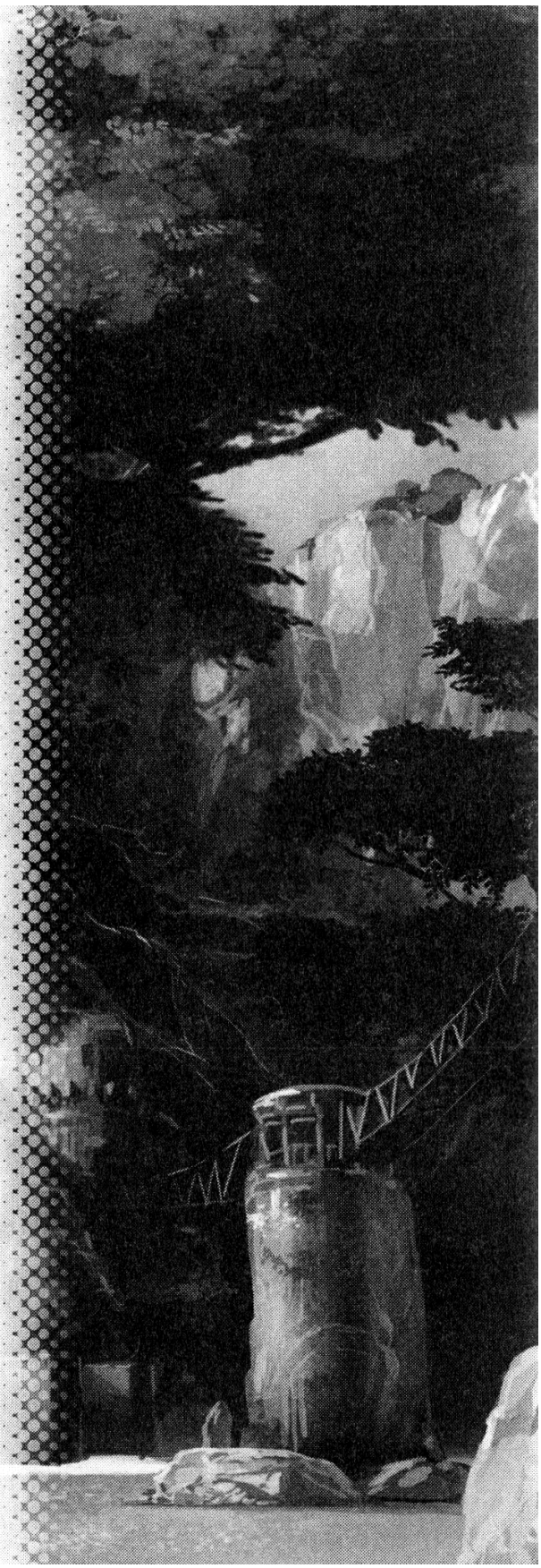

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Prologue

There was a girl who was about to experience an unfortunate event.

“Kukoma ... ...Shou-san ... ...”

The girl was staring at him from behind a jungle bush. It wasn’t by chance. It wasn't for some innocent reason that she'd been curious about ... ... for a long time.

Kukoma Shou, from the day he had arrived here on Banjō Island. This girl has been looking at Shou - Shou and his friends - from this place for 〜〜〜〜 a long time.

Whether it was a sunny day, a rainy day, or a windy day. She has been observing Shou at a level that could no longer be excused even if she were to be called a stalker. But that's exactly what she was doing.

“... ... Huh. It looks like we're going to have to make a big move soon... ... I expect Kukoma Shou's alternative plan to pass... ... I guess I'll have to make a move soon, too... ...” The girl sighed with a very depressed look on her face. Then, as if to encourage herself, she murmured. “──Yes, you're right. I have to work hard too, don't I ... ...!”

The corner of her eyebrows, which had been lowered, rose. Her hands were clenched tightly, as if she had made up her mind about something. “Nn... ...” However, the girl suddenly squirmed and looked uncomfortable. “Well, before that, ... a little ... ...”

She then looked around and turned her attention to the restroom on the beach. It was the one that Shou and the others usually used, but they were currently absorbed in cooking and harpooning, and there was no one around the toilet. “... ...Oh, I'll borrow it... ...” After a quick refusal, the girl started walking towards the cliff, moving quietly through the jungle so that no one would see her.

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“... ... Phew.” The girl breathed a sigh of relief as she sat on the toilet seat. But then, misfortune struck. The toilet was closed.

“... ...What?” Suddenly, the door of the toilet flew open.

“... ... Ah.” Their eyes met. There was a boy with a gaping mouth.

“……” They stared at each other for several moments, both rigid. It was clear to both of them that they didn't understand each other's situation. Her face became hot. The girl's body began to tremble. And then.

“Kyaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa”

“Uwaaaaaaa, I'm so sorry!”

─ Karutia Zokeru.

Unfortunately, the girl's screams were heard all over the island when Shou, the object of her observation, peeked into the toilet. It seemed to echo all over the island.

Episode 1 - The Great Ruckus in Paradise

Dird Shank. Alea Balta. Apuesta da Ruma. The three girls, Shou's dearest friends, were serving lunch at the place where Shou usually lived in his tent.

“Shou, Shou, is everything alright?”

“Hey, hey, is this what you call a situation?”

“The air is heavy ... ...”

As the girls mumbled to themselves, Shou felt terribly uncomfortable. The reason for this was that the cute looking girl he had just met in the bathroom was sitting across from him, looking apologetic...

“...Well, Shou? Is there anything you want to tell me?” This was because next to her was Palty Jurai with a terrifying smile on her face.

Shou was sitting there in a cold sweat from earlier.

“Oh, no, that's not right. I used the bathroom without permission... ... So...”

“Could you please shut up Karutia? I'm asking Shou.”

“Uh-uh... ...”

The girl whose name Palty called - Karutia Zokeru - seemed to be trying to protect Shou. However, Palty's powerful smile made her teary-eyed and shrunken.

“Hey Palty, but you know, I'm sure Shou didn't do it on purpose either.”

“Hey, don't do that, Dird, don't provoke Palty now!”

“I'm sorry, Shou... ... Karutia... ... We don't have anything ... ... to do with it.”

“No, no, no. I'm sorry for the trouble I've caused you... ...”

Alea stopped Dird, who tried to stop her, and Apuesta looked crestfallen, to which Karutia bowed her head apologetically.

In fact, all four of the girls had known about the existence of Karutia for a long time, only Shou hadn't known of her.

"Look, Shou, even if it's just a coincidence, it's not good manners to open the door without checking to see if anyone is in!"

"No, because everyone was over here, and I didn't think anyone would be using that bathroom."

"Shou? That's a disgraceful excuse, isn't it?"

"I'm sorry, I'm sorry, I'm sorry."

In the past, the toilet was supposed to be for Shou's use only, but ... ... now Dird and the other girls used it all the time, and the odds were not good for this pretty girl, who was sitting next to Palty with tears in her eyes and looking embarrassed. In fact, Shou didn't have the courage to make any more excuses to Palty and had no choice but to become a machine that would only bow and scrape.

Seeing him, Alea muttered, "I feel sorry for you, Shou... ..." Palty glared at Alea, and she quickly looked away.

Dird noticed her presence and called out. "Ah, Sensei's back! Welcome back!"

At those words, everyone looked at up. Naturally, it was Miron who had returned.

"Hmph! Hey, eat, eat! Bring me some rice, you guys!"

Ignoring Dird's words and the atmosphere, Miron sat down beside Shou, crossed her arms and said gruffly, "Yes, yes, yes!"

The girls looked at each other and laughed. Dird immediately put a large bowl of rice in front of Miron. Alea and Apuesta looked at each other and breathed a sigh of relief when Miron's return softened the atmosphere a bit.

Then, when they were all ready, Palty took a breath and said, "Whew."

"Shou, Karutia, let's continue after the meal is over. The food will get cold."

With that comment, Shou and Karutia finally loosened the thread of tension that had been holding them back and relaxed their hearts.

Finally, everyone said "Itadakimasu," and began to eat, but Miron began to eat at a very fast pace as if to relieve her frustration.

Miron held out her bowl to Shou with the same vigor, probably finally calmed down now that she had something in her stomach. It was then that she noticed the girl sitting across from Shou.

"Hmm? Oh, Karutia? What are you doing here?"

“Oh ... ..., that's, that's ... ...”

“Yes, did you just notice that? Sensei ... ...” Palty took Miron's teacup, chuckling in exasperation.

“What's the matter? Your place is in the bushes, right? Is it okay for you to come out?”

“Huh? You knew about her, too? Shou was terribly surprised. Apparently, even Miron knew about Karutia.

“I don't care if you know her or not, she's been staring at me with a hot gaze from there ever since Shou-kun came to this island. What? You really didn't notice?”

“Yeah, yeah, yeah!”

To Shou's surprise, Karutia just turned her head away.

Then, with lunch over, and Pī and Piyo in a calm mood with their little squeaks in the incubator, Shou and the others resumed their conversation over a cup of barley tea.

“Um, I'm Karutia Zokeru, ... again. It is nice to meet you at ... ...” Karutia introduced herself in a muffled voice and bowed her head.

Shou also hurriedly returned her bow and said, “Oh, thank you! I'm Kukuma Shou!”

Seeing this, Alea murmured “Is it a matchmaking,” and chuckled. Shou and Karutia both turned bright red. Palty lightly patted Alea on her head.

Shou raised his head and looked again at the girl in front of him, Karutia. With her long, lustrous hair, she gave the impression of being a calm lady with a beautiful, innocent atmosphere. She was beautiful, but she also has a certain simple charm. That was how Shou saw her.

Perhaps it was because he was lightly admiring Karutia that Dird happily announced, “Hey Shou! Isn't Karutia beautiful? You know, Karutia used to be a local internet idol.”

What? An idol?” Shou was surprised by this. Never in his wildest dreams did he think that he would have a close encounter of the third kind with a space idol active off the earth in a toilet on the earth. At the same time, he was very convinced that's why she was so beautiful.

At Dird's introduction, Karutia waved her hand and hurriedly said. “No, no, it's nothing like that! It's just that I've been on internet television, ... and I'm not that popular, ... and I'm not that popular at all, ...” Perhaps embarrassed by Shou's gaze, Karutia's eyes wandered restlessly, still flushed and flickering.

Alea said, “Don't be modest, Karutia, most of the people from outer space know you, so you must be pretty popular. You know, you even appear on Federation TV once in a while.”

“Well, that's just because I do a lot of activities as a publicist for the guild... ... The truth is, I don't really like to be in the public eye.”

“... ... I guess I can kind of understand,” Apuesta murmured. She was also shy, so maybe she and Karutia had a little something in common.

“I see~. So that's why Karutia doesn't always come out of the bushes, huh?”

Dird nodded as if she had gotten it off her chest, but Alea quickly butted in.

“Of course not, you silly queen! What kind of reclusive idol are you!”

“Eh? Because no matter how many times I invite her, she doesn't want to come out in front of Shou~”

“Yeah, that's ... ...” Karutia glanced at Shou, and her face reddened even more.

(Eh, ..., so why is she blushing now ... ...?) Shou thought about it. It seemed she had been watching Shou since day one.

Before Miron moved in, Shou naturally had a lot of time to be alone. This was especially true at night, and there were no neighbors. At the very least, the area around the tent was almost like a private room for Shou, and because it was his room, there were many things that he didn't want people to see ... ...

What if she had seen all of those ... ...? “What ... ..., uh, what ... ... Miss Karutia? Could it be, could it be ... ...?”

“... ... I'm sorry, I'm sorry, please ... ...” She had already turned red and just slumped over.

When Shou realized one of the reasons why Karutia could not come out in front of him, his whole body broke out in a huge sweat. He shouted, “Whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa!”

“Hunh! What? I've seen enough embarrassing scenes of Shou-kun!” Miron grabbed Shou by the neck as he tried to run away. It was a mysterious rivalry.

“Miron-sensei, please don't have a strange sense of rivalry!”

“It's okay, Karutia is a big girl at that age, she knows what she's doing and will naturally try to avoid looking at you. Right? Karutia?” Palty said, trying to calm the situation.

Karutia looked away awkwardly. “I've been ordered by the ... ... top brass to keep a close eye on the ... ... greatest... ...”

“... ...What?”

“So, so ... ... that ... ... I'm sorry, I'm sorry ... ...”

Shou and the others all fell silent as Karutia reddened, looking like she was about to cry.

“Ha ... ... ha ha ... ... O, me, w... wait ....” Shou tried to escape again, but Miron still held on to his neck.

“Wait a minute. I'm not going to let you go.”

“No, no, no, please let me go!” Shou moved his legs back and forth frantically, but he couldn't escape even Miron's one arm.

“And? Will you tell me what you've seen so far and so thoroughly? We have all the time in the world! Come on!”

“What is it that you saw? It's too early to be silly.” ... ... (blushes) “S, sensei, you mustn't ask those things!”

After seeing the reactions of Dird and the others, Karutia blurted out. “That's ... ... a private matter, so I can't ... ... answer you.”

“Hmph! Jesus, you're so boring!”

“But, but!” Then Karutia suddenly looked up and raised her tone of voice.

Shou and the others all paid attention to her.

Karutia gently touched her own lips once ... ... and then looked at Shou with a very serious and clear gaze and said, “I'm going to take responsibility for this, ... I'll take responsibility!”

“... ...What?” All of them were appalled for a while by that cry.

Eventually, Shou realized the meaning of his words and relaxed his cheeks in embarrassment, and at that moment... “You don't have to take responsibility!”

“Guffaw!”

Shou's consciousness faded there as he took synchronized punches from the five on his cheek, chin, and stomach.

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After carrying the unconscious Shou to his tent and laying him down, the remaining members started talking again with barley tea in their hands.

“So Karutia? How is it that you suddenly appeared in front of Shou-kun?”

“Huh? Sensei what do you mean? Didn't he just happen to meet her in the bathroom?”

Dird nodded her head and Miron folded her arms as she spoke.

“Well, I guess it was just a coincidence that they ran into each other in the bathroom. But if you'd been hiding from Shou-Kun like you have been, you wouldn't have taken such a risk. Perhaps you acted like that because you thought it was okay for Shou-kun to find you.”

“I see.” Dird, Alea, Apuesta, and Palty all agreed with that.

Karutia, on the other hand, nodded her head and replied. “Yes ... ..., well, actually, I was ordered by my superiors to ... ... entrap Kukoma Shou-san, and ... ... I was told to ... ... entrap him.”

“Hohoho, entrapment? I see. So, you dared to show off such an embarrassing scene to Shou-kun? This is a very innocent idol, isn't it?”

“No, no, no, no! That was really an accident... ...!” Karutia denied it and turned red.

Dird asked Alea next to her. Hey, hey, what is entrapment?”

“Shut up you idiot. You'll complicate things.”

“Well, are you sure you want to talk about that so easily ... ...?”

“Well, uh, ... maybe you're not cut out to be a spy, ...? Or maybe ... ... you're just pretending to be such a character?”

As Palty said, Karutia was a spy who was watching Shou and trying to get information about him. Even now, she was trying to entrap him into joining the guild to which she belonged, and even though she's on ... ..., there's no way she can simply reveal such information to Dird and the others.

The other members of the guild were quite confused by Karutia's presence.

Then Miron took a sip of his tea and said, “You guys don't get it, do you? It's girls like this who are effective spies. It's a pretty advanced technique to get them to peek into the bathroom under false pretenses.”

“So, um! It really was just a coincidence ... ...!”

“Yes, yes. Even if that's the case, I think she's pretty talented. She's also very good at killing signs. In fact, Shou-kun didn't know about her, right?”

“I'm often told that I'm talented, but ... ... I don't think I'm cut out for this ... ...”

“You're not even aware of it. This is the most troubling type.”

“I've been told that a lot, too ... ... I'm not sure if I'm troubling ... ...” Karutia took Miron's sarcastic words to heart and felt depressed.

Dird was starting to feel kind of sorry for her. “Hey. But what if Karutia entraps Shou? And what happens if Shou goes to Karutia's guild?”

Dird's question was answered by Palty. “That's what they're going to do, they’re going to bring Shou in and form one team with all the guilds except us, Dird.”

“Eee! Soooo, you did? That's not fair! I want to entrap Shou too!”

“But you didn't know that until now. I'm begging you, shut up, you idiot!”

“But if I can team up with Shou, the balance will be tilted at once.”

“Yeah ... ... that weapon is no longer available, but we have Shou's alternative ... ...”

“So that's what I'm thinking ... ...”

“I'm not sure that Shou-kun, who didn't choose any of us, will fall for this natural spy girl,” she said.

“What? Are you a natural ... ...?”

Miron called Karutia a natural, but she nodded her head as if she didn't understand what it meant.

Miron was also right: Shou did not like the idea of fighting in the first place, and even if he were to be entrapped by Karutia, it would not make any difference if the would-be Great Shou did not want to fight.

Then Karutia opened her peach-colored lips in a small smile. “Um, ... actually, there is currently a discussion in the upper echelons about an alternative to that acoustic weapon ... ... If that proposal goes through, there's a chance that it could dramatically change the way we fight.”

“Huh?”

“Seriously?”

“Really?”

“Is that so?”

Dird and the others were surprised; Miron asked back in a calm voice. “Do you already know what that is?”

“No, that much is known to ... ... However, if it is decided, it is said that the battle will be settled in a very short time ... ...”

Dird and the others buzzed; Miron said with interest. “Hmm, ... settled in a short time, hey. I'm sure you'll be able to find something that works for you. So, you were planning to use the timing to entrap Shou-kun?”

“Huh? Oh, no ... ... I don't know how to entrap ... ... you know, I don't know ... ... So, I thought, what should I do? ... ... But for the sake of the guild, I had to leave soon ... ... So, I got nervous and had to go to the bathroom ... ... I was alone in the bathroom, and I was worried about ... ... Kukoma, and he told me that ... ...”

“……” Dird and the others stared at Karutia in silence.

“Huh? Huh? What is it? The way you're looking at me, it's scary ... ...” Karutia's eyebrows furrowed at the attention, though it was a look that contained all sorts of emotions for her that were far too honest.

“I know a lot about natural fears when I see Dird, but ... ... this guy is a different kind.”

“He's ... ... honest, and he's a good kid, but he's ... ...”

“Shou might turn into a terrifying little devil ... ...”

The three of them gasped together, and Dird said, “Huh?”

“Well, I don't know, but if we entrap him, Shou will come to the guild, right? Okay! Then I'll entrap Shou!”

“What? I've already told you that Shou will come to my guild!”

“Well, maybe it's my place ... ...”

“Hmm. No, it could be my place, you know?”

Seeing Dird and the others exchanging such words, Karutia blurted out. “Um, ... do you guys still ... ... like ... ... Kukoma-san?”

“──What?”

Karutia's overly direct statement caused everyone, including Miron, to freeze.

“Oh, I'm sorry, I'm sorry. I'm sorry, but it seems like you don't want me to take him ... ... That's what it looks like ... ...” When Karutia blushed, everyone looked at each other as if in a panic.

Dird was the first to speak. “Well, ... I like Shou, you know? Of course, I like Alea, Apuesta, Palty, Miron Sensei, Pī-chan and Piyo-chan too! What about you, Alea?”

“Don't swing at me! I mean, Dird's likes aren't exactly what Karutia is asking about, are they? ... ... I think of you as a close friend. Yes, next Apuesta.”

“Ah, ah, ah ... ... ah, ah niyo ... ... that.” Apuesta's face turned red, and she turned her head. It was an obvious reaction.

“Well, well, Apuesta was quite fond of Shou from the beginning ... ... Next, what about Palty?”

“Yes, ... I think it would be preferable, but at this stage, well, it's not ... ... anything. However, I don't think any of your lordships have been this close to me in the past.”

“You seem to be very likable there. What about Miron at ... ...?”

“Me, me? You know, of course he's such an important pupil! He's renting the land, and there's no way he's in love with me ... ... There's no way!”

Dird peered curiously at Miron, who suddenly began to get upset. “What's wrong, Sensei? What's wrong with your face?”

Miron turned away from Dird's gaze and said innocently, "... ... Ahem! Oh! I have work to do, so if you'll excuse me..." Miron said it so abruptly that it was unnatural and went back inside the cruiser house. It was apparent that she was running away.

"What? Sensei ran off."

"Hey ... ... Miron seems to be very serious."

"... ... Yeah."

"Well, that was kind of a cute reaction." With that, Dird and the others stared at the cruiser, then turned to Karutia, who was stunned.

Then Alea said, "Why? Since you asked us that, we'll ask you too. What do you think of Shou? Are you seriously trying to entrap him?"

"Well, that's ... ..." Karutia backed away as if frightened when Alea approached her. Then she began to speak in hushed tones.

"It was the first time I had ever kept looking at one ... ... man so intently. At first, he seemed like a cute boy ... ... I think he wasn't used to women very much. Now, he's very aware of you and Miron, and he's confused ... ..., but he's slowly changing ... ..."

Dird and the girls listened quietly to the story.

"It was the same regarding the fight. Kukoma, who at first seemed to be averse to fighting ... ... and hurting all of you, began to feel a friendship with all of you, and then he realized his wish to stop the fighting, albeit in the form of a stalemate ... ... I think he's a very, very fine man."

" ... ..."

No one had asked that much, but Dird and the girls had seen the kind look in her eyes as she talked about Shou and had guessed how she felt. Perhaps noticing their gaze, Karutia bowed and said, "Oh, I'm sorry!" As she blushed all over.

In the warm air, Palty coughed deliberately and clapped her hands to get everyone's attention. "Well, wow, we have our own situations, and we're at war right now. Besides, considering that Shou is an Earthling, ... we're going to have to shelve this matter for a while ... ..."

At that, Dird, Alea, Apuesta, and Karutia all nodded.

"Yeah, that sounds like a good idea ... ... So, wow, I guess I'll go back to my position ... ..." Karutia stood up, bowed to everyone, and headed back towards the bushes.

Watching her, Alea said, "Hey ... ..., that girl definitely brought up that topic on purpose, didn't she?"

"She's a devious natural ... ..."

“Ya, I think she's going to be a tough opponent for different reasons than Dird ... ...”

Alea, Apuesta, and Palty all had complicated looks on their faces, but Dird said innocently, “What is a devious natural?” And was ignored.

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Meanwhile, around that time.

Behind a large waterfall on Banjō Island. There was a large space created by erosion.

“Hey, I'm sorry I'm late.” Mike, out of breath, appeared at the spot. Shou's classmates were all there, except for Shou and the girls, who all gasped at Mike's appearance, as if to say, “Finally! “Hahaha,” Mike opened his mouth with a light laugh.

“It's hard to come here without a Guardian, even if it's to keep Minamida from knowing about it. It's inconvenient to live without a Guardian.”

“That's because you've been holed up watching all those videos ... ... You should exercise a little and get stronger.”

“Hahaha. That's quite a statement you've come to make, Ichiro!” Mike slapped Ichiro on the back, and Ichiro just chuckled tiredly. “Actually, the reason I was late was because of a long lecture from the top. Sorry guys.”

One of the boys laughed back at that. “Haha, it's you anyway, so you probably made up some weird excuse. You should just shut up and nod at the old man's complaints.”

“Well, I've been saying from the beginning that it's easy to tell with a little bit of intuition that all the guilds except for Dird and the four others are in collusion. Not to mention the fact that the organizer is that guy from Jurai. And yet ... ...”

“Well, all guilds are short on talent, ... And even the top is a bunch of old middle managers who are just as poor as we are. Don't say too much about it.”

Another man and woman entered the conversation between Mike and the boys.

“Then again, it's a lot of trouble for just one seat, isn't it?”

“Huh? Look, do you know how much that one seat is worth? With our sixteen guilds combined, if we're not careful, we might have a stronger say than any of Dird's guilds, you know?”

“But that's just a possibility, right?”

“Well, well, calm down. Anyway, what did you conclude about Mike's place?” Another boy asked Mike, and they all looked at him.

“Oh. I knew we could get Shou on ... ...” Mike replied, unusually and a little grumpily. But the others knew why. “It would be arrogant of me to take it in, but ... ... I see. So, it's finally her turn,

huh?”

“Geez, ... that's what I'd call it ... ...” Mike clenched his fists in frustration for some reason.

In fact, there was a well-known local net idol there on the staff of Mike's camp. She used to be in charge of public relations for the guild, but her face became known when she appeared in a promotional video produced by the guild. Of course, the reason why she was included in Mike's team was because of her role as an entertainer. It didn't matter if it was on Earth or in space, a pretty idol would always be used for entertainment.

“But ... ..., I'm against it! There is a world of entertainment that is more suitable for her! I've decided to support her in her career there.”

“So, Mike, you've finally given up? Well, it's only natural, since you've already asked her for a relationship, and she turned you down.”

It was Ichiro who said that. However, the girls in his class interrupted him one after another.

“No, she's not, Ichiro-kun. Actually, she was talking about semi-nudity before she came over here.”

“Yes, yes. She wanted to turn down the offer, but it bothered her, partly because of the guild. She originally didn't want to do much in the way of entertainment, so that's even worse.”

“Oh ... ..., she did?” Ichiro was surprised by the girl's words.

“Yeah. That's when the story of this battle came up, and she was relieved inside that she was going to be sent to Earth. For now, she can get away from her semi-nude work.”

“That's what I mean. I mean, Mike wants her to go back to show business at ... ...”

All the classmates giggled and stared at Mike in unison. The girls looked at him with such disdain that Mike winced.

“Mike ... ..., what kind of a prick are you ... ...?”

“No, Ichiro! You guys are wrong about me too! I'm not going to say that I don't love her, I do love her. It's not that I want to see her semi-nude and embarrassed! It's not that I don't want to see her semi-nude.”

A look of disdain that grew even stronger.

“I've dug a grave, ... You guys know a lot about her, don't you?”

The girl said to Mike, who had calmed down a bit. “Well, she's been asking me about a lot of things, like Mike asking me to swim with him and recommending weird bathing suits. He said he wanted to keep a picture of us as a reminder of our youth and encouraged us to undress.”

“!?”

“Mike ... ..., you're a really straightforward guy. I respect you in a way.”

“Gnnnnnnn ... ...! Hey, you guys! You can't talk to me like that. If you want to get Shou on your side, you're going to need the help of my guild ... ... and, by extension, me!”

“It's not so much Mike's power as it is hers, though.”

“Yes, you're right, Ichiro-kun. She's Mike's boss, isn't she? Shouldn't Mike be the one who should be more humble?”

“Gunununununu ... ... That's true, but ... ...”

“Ugh! There's no need for everyone to get together and bully me like that.” Mike finally lost his patience and slumped to the ground. His classmates couldn't help but laugh at him.

Ichiro, representing all of them, approached Mike and patted him on the shoulder. “I'm sorry Mike, it's true that we were all ordered by our superiors to cajole Shou-kun, but we didn't have any decisive ... ... moves. I'll leave it to Mike's plan.”

“Yeah, well, ... um, I'll take care of it!” Mike got up with Ichiro's help and immediately felt better.

“But it's hard to be a cajoled man, isn't it? We've been told that we have to use a trick to win him over. It's impossible even if you say so! Because Kukoma-kun always has Dird and the others by his side~?”

“Hahahaha! It's true that for Shou, who is used to seeing Dird and the others, you guys are a bit insufficient! But there's nothing to be so depressed about.” Mike, who was laughing with his arms folded, was pushed by several girls and fell into the waterfall.

Boom! There was a loud bang, and the schoolgirls looked really refreshed.

“Ha, ha, ... I mean, Shou-kun is in an isolated situation, and there is so little information about him, and we didn't get to know each other very well ... ... Well, at least if the situation was better, I think there's a good chance for everyone, yeah.”

As he desperately tried to choose his words to comfort the girls, they smiled at him and said, “Ichiro-kun ... ...” As if embarrassed, they relaxed their expressions and smiled at him. It was a successful follow-up, somehow.

“Besides, we were originally combatants, ... We don't have any skills in cajoling people, and it's only natural that we're at an overwhelming disadvantage compared to Dird and the girls who have been with Shou-kun since he came to the island.”

“That's true. Besides, Shou-kun is surrounded by Miron-sensei, an undisciplined and too free guard dog.”

Everyone laughed out loud at those words.

“That's right. In that sense, I think she's the one with the most potential to entangle Shou-kun. I think she's the best person to be able to cajole Shou-kun.”

Ichiro took a breath and said, “I'm not sure if I would leave it to her ... ..., but I'm worried about her in many ways.”

“That's right ... ...” Ichiro and the others were troubled.

From the waterfall basin, a poor man's voice called out, “It's so cold!” but no one even tried to help him.

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“Oh my God, ... really, I've had a bad day ... ...”

That night. When Shou woke up from his fainting spell, Dird and the girls apologized to him and went back to their respective homes for the day. After that, Shou, exhausted both physically and mentally, slept early in the tent with Pī and Piyo, but woke up to urinate, and then went to the toilet on the cliff alone.

“Okay ... ..., I won't make the same mistake again ... ...!” Arriving at the toilet, to avoid a major incident like the last time, he knocked on the door to make sure there was no response before going in and finishing his business. Then, as he was coming back towards his tent, Shou suddenly looked towards the bushes.

There was no sign of Karutia anywhere, not even a hint of her. Perhaps it's because he was now living in a tent, but he'd become quite sensitive to the sounds and signs of animals passing nearby. This was due to the vulnerability of the tent, which was only a piece of cloth, even though it was a place to live and protect oneself. But even though his senses must have been further honed through the battles with the girls, he didn't even notice that Karutia was nearby.

(... ... is she really here?) Shou stared at the bushes that Miron had said were Karutia's fixed position, but he couldn't seem to find anyone there.

“Um, ... Karutia-san~? Are you there?” The moment Shou called out to her, he felt Karutia's presence.

─ Rustle, rustle.

“Huh?”

Karutia appeared from the bushes with an apologetic expression. “Hello, good evening ... ...”

Even though he’d seen her appear in front of him with his own eyes, Shou could not believe the fact that she had been lurking there until now.

A few minutes later, Shou and Karutia were sitting side by side on the beach.

“Um, Karutia-san. Are you sure you want to come out here like this and talk to me?”

“Yeah, uh, ... no, maybe ... ... I don't think they're expecting much from me ... ... I think I'll be fine ... ...”

“Oh, I see ... ...”

It was quite negative. The fact that no words of encouragement came out immediately was proof that Shou was not yet used to women, but Shou asked something that had been bothering him.

“So ... ..., um, is that why you approached me, ...?”

“Ah, yes. Um, well, there's actually something I wanted to ask you ... ...”

“... ...Yes?”

“Is it possible that you're the one who saved me from falling off the ... ... bridge before, Karutia?”

“... ... Ah.”

It was when he and the girls had gone to play in a cove on a remote island. Shou fell from a bridge into the sea but was pulled up by a mysterious person who saved his life. So, when he met Karutia, he thought that maybe, just maybe.

“... ... Yes. Yes.”

“I knew it! I mean, thank you so much for that time! I've been wondering about it for a long time, and it's so refreshing to finally understand. Thank you very much.”

“Oh, uh, ...! I'm sorry, too!”

“What? Why are you apologizing?”

“Oh, yeah, well, that ... ...” Karutia looked frightened and confused as she lowered her head. Then she gently touched her own lips, which turned red again as he watched. But Shou couldn't understand why. Karutia struggled to speak, though she was flustered. “Um ... ..., I'm a spy, you know ... ...? You can't thank me for that ... ...”

“Oh, that's what you mean. You don't have to worry about it. As long as me and Dird and the others are fighting, it's normal for us to gather information. Besides, it's also true that you helped me, isn't it? So, I really wanted to thank you.”

“Kukoma-san, ...” Karutia was stunned, terribly surprised to see Shou smiling genuinely.

“... ... I think I know how you all feel ... ...” She then mumbled quietly, but her voice didn't quite reach Shou.

“Huh? Karutia-san, did you just say something?”

“Oh, no, no! I mean, I'm sorry about today! That's it!”

“Ah.”

Karutia bowed her head as low as it would go and ran straight for the bushes.

“Well ... ..., I also wanted to ask you what you meant by taking responsibility ... ...” Shou was a little embarrassed when he remembered what Karutia had said today. He didn't think she meant what he had imagined, but he was still curious.

“... ... But what will happen now?”

─ Karutia Zokeru. With her finally appearing,

─ Dird.

─ Alea.

─ Apuesta

─ Palty

─ and Miron.

The girls' attitudes and feelings towards Shou will show a greater change...

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The day after Shou and Karutia's toilet encounter.

Shou's daily life had returned to a terribly peaceful one, as the battle had been put on hold while Shou's alternative plan was being heard. Not just Shou and the girls, but also Minamida, Miron, Tomi, Mike, Ichiro, and the rest of the villagers were living more spontaneously than usual. Probably because the concern of fighting, which was usually placed in the corner of their consciousness, had been removed. Karutia was still keeping an eye on Shou from the bushes and occasionally showed up when Shou went to bring her something to drink. Shou wondered if there was any point in hiding ... ... anymore, but he did not ask Karutia about it.

The sunshine on Banjō Island was strong again today, shining down on Shou and his friends.

Then one day, for the first time in a long time, a large supply of goods from space arrived on the island.

“Wow, this is a supply shipment?”

“... ... Yeah, Shou, are you surprised?”

“Uh-huh.”

Apuesta giggled, while Shou's eyes remained fixed on the ground.

The reason was that there were a lot of large containers piled up at the collection point. The containers had been sent from outer space, and Minamida was busy managing them nearby. There were also many items that Apuesta dealt in as merchandise, so Shou and the others were asked by Apuesta to work part-time to collect and organize these items.

“It's amazing, isn't it, Shou! I've done this job several times, but I think this is the most work I've ever done.”

“Yes, I suppose so. It's going to be hard for Apuesta to handle all these by herself ... ...”

Next to Shou, Dird and Palty also murmured this as they looked up at the pile of containers. Alea, however, was running late and had not yet arrived at the scene.

Shou, still surprised, turned to Apuesta and asked, “But that's really a lot of ... ... stuff, what do you have this time?”

“Well, ... maybe it looks like a lot ... ... because of the building materials for the recreational facilities we imported from Jurai.”

“Building materials?”

“What's that~?”

“Recreational facilities, huh?”

Shou, followed by Dird and Palty, threw questions, and Apuesta quickly answered using her soroban-shaped vocalizer.

A proposal to build a hot spring resort on Banjō Island was approved in order to make effective use of the hot springs on the island. Apparently, the building materials for the construction of the facility were in this shipment.

“Wow, a hot spring.”

“That's great! Oh, let's all go there together when it's ready! Right?”

“Yes, Dird, but for now, let's try to help Apuesta with her work.”

“Yes!” Shou and the others looked at the excited Dird and smiled.

Just then, Alea came running in, looking exhausted. “Oh, hey! Sorry I'm late ... ...”

“Oh, Alea's here too. Are you okay? You look really tired ... ...”

“Oh, yeah, I'm fine. Don't worry about it. Haha.”

“Oh, yeah?”

Shou wondered what was wrong with Alea, who had sweat pouring down her forehead. She may have been a bit of trouble to begin with, but she wasn't the type to be late, so what's wrong? Shou wondered, but Alea quickly replied, "Which one? Wow, what a lot! Are we going to collect this by ourselves? ... ... Wow, ...," she said, returning to her usual reaction.

"Well, then, ... since we're all here, let's get to work, shall we?" Apuesta said, and Shou and the others replied to each other.

While the work was going on, Apuesta suddenly dropped her vocalizer with a serious face and went into one of the containers to check the contents. Curious, Shou and the others looked at each other and followed Apuesta.

"Apuesta? What's wrong?" Shou called out, Apuesta came outside, looking a little pale...

" ... ... Some of the items have been stolen."

"What?" Shou and the others were surprised. For a while after that, they were no longer able to work.

Minamida came to investigate and found that some of the items were indeed missing, and he said that he would conduct a more thorough investigation, considering the possibility that the stolen goods had been removed at a way station on the way to Earth.

There was also an unnaturally large gap between the cargo in the container. Upon inspection, it was determined that the gap was probably a packing error. However, Apuesta was not convinced and listened to Minamida with a puzzled look on her face.

Shou and the others went back to their part-time jobs after that, but as expected, they were so worried about the stolen goods incident that they couldn't get any work done.

"Hmmm. We've never seen anything like this before, right? It might be kind of scary."

"Yes, it is ... ... It's never happened before ... ..."

Dird and Palty said in confusion, and Shou's anxiety grew as well. He didn't want to imagine it, but the thought of someone on the island ... ... crossed his mind slightly.

"No, no, no. Hey, what do you think about Alea..." After saying that, Shou's voice stopped.

This is because Alea, who was next to ... ..., had an agonized expression on her face, looking more serious than Apuesta, who had suffered damage.

"──Hmm? Ah, ah, what is it Shou? Do you need something?"

"Oh, no, it's ... ... eh, it's nothing."

"Really? But theft is so scary. If the culprit was Mike or something, I might be able to laugh it off."

“Ah, haha. If it had been some kind of DVD that was stolen, I would have known right away.” Shou returned the joke, but it was clear that something was wrong with Alea.

A few hours later, Shou and his team finished their part-time jobs. Leaving the rest to Minamida, who said he would continue to check for stolen goods, Shou and the others had to leave.

“Good work today, everyone.”

Apuesta handed Shou and the girls their wages on the spot, but because of the incident, Shou and the girls couldn't honestly appreciate the reward. Apuesta sensed this and apologized, saying, “... ... I'm sorry,” and Shou and the others hurried to follow her.

After that, Palty suggested that they have dinner together, but …

“Sorry. I've got some things to do. I'm going home first today. See you later!” Alea declined the invitation, raised her hand, and quickly walked away.

(Hmmm... hmmm... ... ... I knew something was wrong with Alea ... ...) But before Shou could say anything to her, she disappeared into the jungle in a flash.

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Alea then went to a slightly open area in the middle of the overgrown jungle. There was a tent pitched there, and a certain man with glasses.

“There you go.” Alea tossed the little bit of food she had purchased from Tomi's store before coming there to the man, who caught it with both hands and began to gulp it down.

When he finished his meal, the man's face broke into a smile, as if he was somewhat satisfied, and he said, “―Huh. Thanks for the help, Alea, I appreciate it.”

“Don't address me in a familiar way.” Alea replied bluntly and turned away. “You're right, I don't even have the right to do this ... ... thing to you. You know that don't you?”

“Yeah, yeah. I know, I know. But you're so sweet, Alea, you're my sister-in-law.” The man with the goofy expression on his face is the one. It was Alea's sister, Loretta's ex-husband - Alan.

“Who the hell is your sister-in-law? You've already divorced my sister! You're a stranger who has nothing to do with us anymore! So, take this and get the hell out of here!” Alea glared at Alan and threw an envelope containing her part-time job wages that Apuesta had just given her to Alan.

Alan shrugged and quickly picked up the envelope. “It's been a long time since we've seen each other. This is not enough. This is not enough for me. I told you. I told you, I've got a great deal for you this time. That plan is going to pay off... ...! I just need more money for it!”

“You ... ...!” Alea grew increasingly angry at Alan's snide remark. But she stifled it, shook her fist and said, “... ... That's the best I can do.”

“You'll have some more when you get home, right? Come on, Alea.”

“Don't be silly! My sister's got enough on her plate with your debt and Melissa's child support! I'm doing this on the condition that you don't ever come near her again! Just get the hell out of here!”

“Alea ... ..., yeah, ..., that's right, ...” Perhaps sensing Alea's rage, Alan instantly looked weak. “It's all my fault ... ... I know ... ... I'm sorry Alea ... ... If I had been better, Loretta, the kid, and you wouldn't have had to go through all that ... ...”

“ .....”

“Look, Alea, I want to start over with Loretta. I'll do better this time, Alea tell Loretta. Come on, please.”

“I told you, I won't let you see my sister.” When Alea gave him a dumbfounded look, Alan's mouth quirked up in a grin.

“I see ... ... But you hid me when I illegally entered Earth. I trust you to be nice, but you don't want to bother Loretta or anyone else, do you?”

“Guh ... ... you ... ...!” Alea gritted her teeth; it wasn't a direct statement, but that's what Alan meant when he said he would force her to meet Loretta if she didn't come up with the money. At the mention of this, Alea tried desperately to suppress her anger. She didn't want to get her sister, Melissa, and Shou in trouble. She didn't want to do that, so she tried to manage on her own.

Seeing Alea, Alan chuckled and said, “I'll leave it to you then.”

Without replying to his words, Alea ran away from the place.

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The weather was fine again the next day. Dird, Alea, Apuesta, Palty and some others were around Shou's tent as usual in the hot and humid weather. Since there was nothing Shou and the others could do, they tried not to worry too much about it.

As they finished making lunch and were about to start eating, Alea called out to Apuesta.

“Hey Apuesta, do you have a minute?”

“?”

Then Alea and Apuesta walked off into the jungle where they couldn't be heard by the others. Shou and the rest looked at them curiously.

“Do you want to discuss something?”

“It's unusual for Alea to ask Apuesta for advice, isn't it?”

Palty replied to Shou's question, while Dird said, “Let's hurry up and eat, everyone!” Dird was waiting with an empty stomach.

“Hey, guys.

“Sorry to interrupt your lunch.”

“Huh? Minamida-san and Loretta-san?” Shou, Dird, and Palty walked over to them.

“Is something wrong?”

“No, it's about yesterday's investigation. You guys seemed to be wondering about it, so I thought I'd give you a report on the investigation, but I guess the timing wasn't quite right. Sorry.”

“Oh, I see.”

Alea and Apuesta were nowhere to be seen, but Shou and the others heard from Minamida there. It seemed that the perpetrator of the theft was not a resident of the island. Shou and the others were greatly relieved just to hear that.

“Thank God! I mean, it's not good that there was theft, but it's good to know that it's not the islanders' fault, though!”

“Yes, Dird, Shou seems quite relieved too.”

“Yes! Thank you, Minamida. I'm somewhat relieved.”

“Haha, that's good to hear. I was worried about you guys, too.”

With the air becoming more harmonious, Shou calmed down and looked at Loretta there and said, “Oh, um, did you have something to do, Loretta-san?”

“Yes, I did. Actually, I wanted to talk to you guys about something ... ...”

“Talk about something? With us?” Shou looked at Dird and Palty, then the three of them turned to Loretta.

“Yes. Actually...”

Shou and the others then heard from her that something was wrong with Alea. Loretta said that since yesterday, Alea had been acting strangely fidgety and suspicious, and seemed uncomfortable. Alea's face was also stiff, and she was clearly different from usual.

Shou had an idea of what she was talking about, and he told her that he had a similar impression of Alea, which Dird and Palty agreed with.

“Yeah ... ... I get it. I'd also like to talk to Alea some more, but it might be something I'm not comfortable talking about, so I wanted to ask Shou-kun and the girls?”

“Okay, I understand. I'll ask them later.”

“Please do. Then, Minamida-san, shall we go?”

“Yes. See you later, everyone.”

With that, Minamida and Loretta left. At the same time Alea and Apuesta came back out of the jungle. Alea noticed their backs as they left and said, “Hmm? Huh? Wasn't my sister and Minamida here just now?”

“Welcome back Alea, Apuesta, yeah, they were both here. They were here to report on yesterday.”

“Oh, I see. Oh, I have some business to attend to, so I'll just take this with me.”

“What?”

As soon as she came back, Alea went away with a bowl of freshly made sashimi.

Shou and the others who saw her off were all aware that something was wrong with Alea. When they told Apuesta about what Loretta had just told them, she also thought that there was something wrong with Alea. Just a few minutes ago, she was suddenly asked for advice about a certain business.

“Business? Alea?”

“Yeah, ..., so I thought something was wrong with ... ...”

“Well, that's certainly ... ... right.”

Dird, Apuesta, and Palty all looked puzzled. Shou looked the same way and said, “... ... I'm going to go after Alea for a bit. There's something wrong with her after all.”

Dird and the girls were puzzled by the suggestion, and said, “What.”

“Don't worry. I'm just going to ask her a few questions. Can you guys go ahead and eat your food while I’m gone?”

“Uh-huh~”

“Shou ... ... are you okay on your own?”

“Shall we come too?”

“Umm. I don't want to barge in with too many people. I'm going to go now.” With that, Shou took off running after Alea.

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“Here you go.”

In the middle of the jungle - Alan's place of residence - Alea came to him and handed him a bowl of sashimi, which Alan finished in no time.

“The fish on this island is delicious. So, did you bring any money with you? If not, it would be quicker if you let me see Loretta.”

Alea clicked her tongue and pulled a thick envelope out of her pocket, tossing it to Alan, who took it and examined the contents with an impressed “Oh”.

“This is all the money I've saved up. I'll give it to you, and you can get the hell off this island.”

“Heh, that's quite an amount. But that's still not enough, you know. I'm going to need more if I'm going to do business as I plan.”

“You ... ..., that's enough!” Give him an inch and he’ll take a mile. Alea had reached the end of her patience with Alan. She finally exploded, something she had been holding onto for a long time.

“Do you have any idea how much trouble my ... ... sister went through after you disappeared! I'm not sure what to do. She's still living on her own, raising your kid! If you hadn't run away, ... if you hadn't run away! My sister would have had a much easier life if you hadn't run away! You! I don't know.

“I didn't mean to run away!” Alan suddenly let out a loud shout that sounded like a scream.

The power of it caused Alea to shrivel up for a moment.

“I didn't run away! Even this time, I came back with a promising, lucrative deal! If this story works out, we can even pay off all our debts ... ...! And then we can all live together again, and you can live comfortably! You've always been smart, you know that, right?”

“Huh. I'm sorry, but there's a girl I know who is familiar with business. I asked her to explain it to me and I already knew everything.” Alan shivered as if frightened by Alea's words.

“Wow, you know ... ... what?”

“I mean that everything you say ... ... is a hasty lie!!!!”

“Huh!”

“How can we pay off our debts? What can we live with? Why do you have to be the ... ... one to ... ... hurt my sister? Don't make my sister suffer any more! It's a waste of money! Don't show up here again! Go home! Get out of here!

“Gghh, gghh, gghh ... ...” At first, Alan was dismayed by Alea's shout, but soon his expression changed to a fierce one.

“That's right. Let's think about it. Yes, it was fortunate for you and the guild that you hid me like this!”

“ ... ... What do you mean?”

Alan changed the subject; Alea listened with contempt.

“From what I've heard, the war between the guilds is at a stalemate? I'm the guy who fought alongside Yamada Seina who destroyed the Da Ruma guild! Hire me as your advisor, and your team will definitely win!”

“Now you're trying to take money from my guild? Ha! What kind of advice can you give me as a mere operator?”

“Haha! Battlefield exchanges aren't the only way to fight. You're on good terms with ... ... and the rest of the guild, aren't you? Then it's easy to talk about.

Hearing that statement and ... ... seeing Alan's disgusting smile, Alea's expression, which had been filled with anger, turned quiet and cruel. What little sympathy and kindness Alea had had for him were all gone by then. All that was left was contempt. The only thing left was disdain, because she knew that Alan was referring to the assassination of all the other representatives.

“ ... ... You really are the worst kind of scum, aren't you?” Having thus given up on Alan, Alea turned her back on him and walked away. “I should have turned a guy like you in as soon as I could. I'm gonna have to call the cops on you.”

At Alea's words, Alan giggled and stood up. “Wait, wait, wait! Oi! I'm your brother-in-law!”

But Alea had already moved on, completely ignoring him.

“Damn, damn ... ... wait!” Alan was in a hurry, and to his surprise, he suddenly started running and jumped on Alea!

“Whoa! What the hell? Alea's reaction was too slow, and she was pinned down and unable to move. “Damn it! You've got to be kidding me! Hey! Get off of me!”

However, even with Alea's power, she could not get Alan off of her. He, too, was Bio-Enhanced.

“Heh, heh. I know, right? You're in love with me, aren't you, Alea?”

“Huh?” Alea's eyes widened in agitation as he grabbed her arm and said that.

“You haven't always been honest with me, you know. Even though you pretended to be angry like that, you were really worried about me, weren't you? That's why you shelter me and treat me well, right?”

“Nah, ...!” Alea's cheeks flushed red.

Seeing this, Alan sounded even more enthused. “Hey, please, it would help if you could talk to

Loretta. If this works out, you'll be out of debt and our family can live together. You really wanted that too, didn't you?"

"Fuck ... ... you ... ...!"

"Stop acting up and listen to me. I don't want to rough up my pretty sister-in-law."

"Damn ... ... you ... ...!" Completely subdued by Alan's power, Alea was unable to escape. (What the hell is this? ... ... Damn ... ... what am I supposed to do? A few tears began to ooze from Alea's eyes. "Hey ... ... let me go, you idiot! Get out of my way!!!"

"What kind of idiot are you? Come on, be honest with me..."

"Ohhhh!!!"

"Hmm? What the...hell!"

Suddenly, Alan, who was on top of Alea, was blown away by a strange voice.

At that moment, Alea saw that someone had jumped on Alan's back. And it was someone Alea knew well...

"Shou, Shou!"

"Oh my God, ... Alea, are you okay? Shou looked at Alea as he held on to Alan. He was relieved to see that Alea was all right. She looked relieved.

"Hey, why is Shou here?"

"Alea was acting weird, so I came after you! Then I saw this guy attacking you!"

"Gu ... ..., what the hell are you doing! Get out of my way! You're hurting me!"

"Whoa!

Alan swung his arm wildly, and it hit Shou hard in the face. Shou let go of Alan with the impact, and rolled over, the blow of Alan's Bio-Enhancement being much stronger than that of a normal human being, which was probably why Alea jumped to her feet.

"Shou!" She ran over to Shou, who sat up, holding his cheek.

"Ow, ... But I'm okay though. Is it because of the Guardian?"

"Shou ... ... you idiot! If it was the Guardian, you wouldn't have gotten a scratch!" Alea held Shou's body.

Alan, who had gotten up, stared at them and shouted. "What the hell is wrong with you! You just barged in out of nowhere! I'm having an important conversation with my family!"

“What? Family?” Shou's eyes lit up in surprise, but Alea immediately responded in a loud voice.

“Who said anything about family! You've got to be kidding me! You bastard!”

“Damn it, ...! Hey, hey! You! Who the hell are you? You've made a mess of things!”

Shou said as he slowly stood up to Alan who pointed a finger at him. “I'm Kukoma Shou, a friend of Alea's. Who the hell are you, anyway?”

“Well, that's none of your business! You're just a friend, don't interrupt me!”

“I'm barging in because we're friends! Violating Alea is not something that ... ... a family member would do!”

“Ugh!” Perhaps overwhelmed by Shou's powerful righteous argument and his eyes, Alan trailed off and began to inch back. “Damn it!” Alan then turned around and ran off deeper into the jungle.

“... ... Oh, yo, thank God.” Relieved, Shou just collapsed into a heap.

“Shou, Shou, hey! Are you okay?”

“Uh, yeah. I'm fine, Alea, thank you.”

“Thank you.” ... ... What the hell are you doing? You can't just jump on a guy like that!”

“Haha. But I'm glad you got away. To be honest, I was really shocked ... ...” Shou laughed, and Alea's expression relaxed as if she was relieved to see him, then she sighed and scratched her head, looking in the direction Alan had run off.

“He's always been a man of his word, you know. He attacked me reflexively just now because Shou attacked him out of nowhere, but he's the kind of guy who would heckle you in a heartbeat if you faced him. He's really a pathetic asshole.”

“ ... ... Is that person really Alea's family?”

Alea replied bluntly to Shou's question. “He's my sister's ex-husband, so he used to be like family to me. But I don't think of him as family anymore.”

“Loretta's ... ... I see ... ..., so family is ... ...” He looked at the tent and the bowl of sashimi and let out a small “oh. Shou looked at her worriedly, and Alea nodded unhappily.

They then headed out of the jungle to report Alan to Minamida. It was a country road not far from Alea's house, and Alea decided to contact him from home.

Shou was still wobbly, so Alea walked with Shou’s arm on her shoulder, and explained to him about Alan. He shouted.

“Whoa, what's with you, Shou, suddenly shouting so loudly?”

“Alea, are you sure you can leave her alone? He's been threatening Alea with Loretta-san, hasn't he? Could it be that person ... ...!”

“... ... Eh?” Alea's expression paled as she realized what Shou was trying to say. “That guy ... ... can't be, he's going to my sister's place!”

“Yes! Let's hurry up!” Shou nodded and was about to run, but the damage Alan had done to him earlier was still more than he thought, and he wobbled on his feet and fell.

“Hey! Hey Shou! Are you okay?”

“Oh, I'm fine! I'm fine, but Alea, hurry up and get to Loretta-san!”

“But, but...”

“Just hurry up! I'll be right behind you!”

“... ...God, I already know!” Alea quickly began to run.

But...

“Oh...? Alea and Shou-kun? What are you doing in a place like that?”

“Yeah ... ..., right, sis!”

It was Loretta who called out to them. She carried baby Melissa on her back, a cloth eco-bag dangling in her hand, and came strolling leisurely down the street.

“Alea? What's wrong with you looking so scared? And Shou-kun, ... Oh my God! You're hurt! What's wrong? What's going on?”

“Ah, haha. I'm fine. It's not a serious injury ... ... Ouch.”

Loretta touched Shou's swollen cheek with concern, then turned her attention to Alea. “Alea? What the hell happened to you?”

“U ... ...” Alea was searching for the right words, lost. She wasn't sure if she should tell her about Alan or not. However, Alea's attitude seemed to have made Loretta realize the gravity of the situation.

“Alea...” Loretta quietly called Alea's name.

“... ... sister.” Seeing the expression on her sister's face, Alea knew that it was impossible to hide anything from her anymore, so she told her what had just happened in its entirety, without hiding anything.

Then - Loretta closed her eyes and answered shortly, “Yes. Then I guess I'll have to clean up the rest, Alea, please.”

“Yeah, ..., right, sis?”

Loretta left Melissa and the eco-bag with Alea and ran off into the jungle.

“Wait, wait, sis! I'm coming with you!”

“Don't worry, Alea, go into the house and take care of Shou-kun's wounds!” With that, Loretta quickly disappeared from sight.

At that moment, a Cabbit - M - appeared in front of her.

“Wha!”

Naturally, both Shou and Alea were startled.

Then, M said in a firm voice as usual. “It's okay, don't worry, Shou-kun, Alea-chan.”

“Huh?” Shou and Alea were puzzled. “Eh, um, ... M-san?”

“Yes. Minamida-kun is on his way over there. He'll take care of the rest.”

“What? Minamida-san?”

“And you don't want to see them fighting, do you, Alea?”

Shou and Alea couldn't help but look at each other when M said this in a joking manner.

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“Damn it ... ... what the hell ... ... is that thing ... ...!” Alan fled, breathing hard as he continued to run, and when he emerged from the jungle, he was walking tiredly down a country road.

“She’s ruined my plans, ...!” Alan shouted in frustration.

Suddenly, a figure appeared in front of him, blocking the way. Stopping in his tracks, Alan frowned and said, “Hey, what's up with you? I don't know who or what you are but get out of the way before you get hurt!”

“.....” The hat-wearing, sunglasses-wearing figure slowly walked up to Alan.

“Hey, what the hell. I said get the fuck out of my way!”

“ ... ... You're still the same, Alan.”

“! How did you know my name? ... ...”

The person - Minamida - took off the hat and sunglasses he was wearing, revealing his face.

“What? Oh, you ... ...!?”

“Oh dear, ... I didn't expect you to come to Earth. I'm sure you know this by now, but you're under arrest and you're going to have to follow me, Alan.” Minamida stared at Alan and told him in a somewhat dumbfounded voice.

Alan was upset and then pointed at Minamida and said, “Whoa, you owe me! Even when you came up in space! Even when Kamidake didn't have the manpower! Oh, you have no idea how many bones I broke for you!”

“Mr. Barry and Mr. Cohn have both paid for their sins. All that's left is Alan-san.”

“Oh, they're traitors! Forcing all their debts on me alone!”

“That's for the court to decide. There's no point in telling me, you know.”

“Guh ... ...! But you still owe me! Besides, my debt is just pocket change to you now, isn't it? I know that. I know that you have assets that rival even the royal family of Jurai!”

“.....”

“So, come on, help me out for old time's sake. I'm a man too, and I wouldn't be so brazen as to give you ... ... Haha. Just lend it to me, that's all. See? Okay?”

To Alan, who grinned, Minamida kept his stern look and sighed a little. “ ... ... I have no reason to lend you any money. Besides, if I lend you money here, it won't be for your own good.”

“!?”

He refused crisply with harsh words.

Alan gritted his teeth tightly and glared at Minamida. “You're a hypocrite! You've just been favored! You were only favored because of your Earth-bred status!”

“.....”

“Me too! I was in the same place as you! And yet I'm ... ...!!! Why, why, why! Why this ... ...! What's the difference between you and me?” Alan shouted, confused and pulled his hair. “Why do you have to be the one to ... ... fuck!!!!” Alan then tried to sneak up behind him and pull out his gun.

But...

“Minamida-san is rich, you didn't do anything. That's it.”

“!!!” Alan's hand, gripping the gun, was firmly grabbed by a figure behind him.

“You ... ... Le, Loretta!”

“Loretta-san ... ...!”

Alan and Minamida, two voices uttered almost simultaneously.

“Sorry for the inconvenience, Minamida-san. And I'm not dressed for this ... ...” Loretta, Alan's ex-wife, appeared with a feeble smile on her face. Her hair and clothes were covered with leaves, indicating that she had been running through the jungle.

When Loretta appeared, Minamida hurriedly put on his hat and put his sunglasses back on. Seeing this, Loretta gave a small chuckle. However, her expression quickly turned cold. “I see you've been seeing Alea. And also, Shou-kun.”

“! What, why are you telling me that ... ...!”

“How dare you come back to ... ... me when you ran away without saying anything? On top of that, you put a burden on my sister by ... ... doing that.”

“No, no, no! I didn't mean to run away!”

“I don't care why now. Now go get Minamida-san to take you away. Minamida-san, I'm sorry, but I'm counting on you.”

“Yes, I will. I'm aware of Alea's situation, so I'm not going to accuse her of harboring Alan-san.”

“Thank you, ...Minamida-san.” Loretta tugged on Alan's hand, which was still in her grip, and tried to take him to Minamida.

But Alan fought against it, saying. “Wait, wait, wait, wait! Please help me! We're a couple, aren't we?”

“No. We're not married anymore. But ... ... I'll take care of your debt from when you got together with me. It's a lesson in how stupid I've been.”

“!!!”

“So, come on, give it up.” Loretta said - but Alan replied.

“... ... child, was born, wasn't it?”

“Alea told you. But you don't need to worry about the child. You're not qualified to be a father right now...”

And just as Loretta was about to tell him that. The muzzle of the gun Alan was holding was pointed at her head.

“!!! Loretta-san!” Minamida shouted, but Alan took advantage of the moment to escape from Loretta's hands and restrain her body as if she were a hostage. However, Loretta did not seem to be in a hurry at all and kept her eyes cold.

“Don't move! This thing is something that even an A rank Guardian can't prevent at close range!” Alan shouted, glaring at Minamida, to which Minamida replied in confusion.

“Alan-san ... ...! Do you even know what you're doing!”

“Shut up!”

“Minamida-san. This is the kind of man he is. He's a person who doesn't deserve your pity.”

“! Just, shut up!”

“You're a ... ... stupid person who doesn't even understand the meaning of Minamida-san coming to get you.”

“Damn it, ..., I told you to shut up!”

At that moment. Loretta's figure, the one Alan was supposed to have restrained, stirred like a phantom.

“!?” Both Alan and Minamida widened their eyes in astonishment. Then, the next moment. A ray of light flashed off the gun Alan was holding.

“What the hell? Damn it! A simulated animeroid? Where are you?”

“I'm here!” The confused Alan looked behind him. Loretta emerged from the bushes a short distance from the spot. “I've had it with you, haven't I? Did you forget that I was a pirate?”

“Huh?”

With a nimble step, Loretta instantly closed the distance between her and Alan and slammed her fist into Alan's midsection with a single blow like a gale.

“Hyah!” Alan screamed in agony as the blood drained from his face. His legs were shaking, and he was about to fall, but...

“You're not ready to fall down yet, are you?”

“Hiiiiii ... ...!”

Loretta's devilish expression made Alan look as if he had seen the despair of this world.

Crack! Thud! Moggah! Boom! Boom!

Bus! Crack! Thud! Moggah! Boom!

Crack! Thud! Gagga! Boom! Bam! Boom!

It was an amazing barrage of blows. Alan was not allowed to fall down, but just kept swinging like a sandbag. The scene was so horrific that Minamida forgot to even speak for a while, but eventually he came to his senses and said, “Oh, excuse me! That's enough ... ...!”

“—— Eh? Oh, my God, I'm so embarrassed.” Loretta's hand finally stopped, as if she realized

what she was doing when Minamida told her. The expression on her face changed from her previous expression and returned to her original calm and quiet one.

And then Alan, freed from her onslaught, ... fell flat on his back like a puppet with a broken string. Alan's face was battered all over and he was frozen in a medical case that Minamida had prepared.

Looking at him, Loretta said with a contented smile on her face. “Huh ... I made sure to put in the amount of trouble he caused Alea and Shou-kun, so thanks to that, I feel refreshed.”

“Yeah, that was the best part ... ...” Minamida replied with a slight shrug, then regained his composure and said, “But ... ... what should we do? Now that Alan-san has been found in this way, ...”

Loretta smiled back at Minamida, who gave her a complex look. “Thank you very much. However, as for my debts, I will take care of them myself. If I don't, I won't be qualified to be a mother ... ...”

“ ... ... I see.”

“Yes. It's not like I can say anything about Alan when I'm dependent on Alea after all. Oh, and I was granted permission to defer payment of the debt, so don't worry about it. I'm planning to start working in earnest as soon as my daughter is less of a handful.”

“I see.”

“Yes. Thanks to some softy, MMD has put together a lump sum of debt for us, so I think we'll be able to manage well enough.” Loretta smiled, causing Minamida to look away, a little embarrassed.

“Oh, no, that ... ... right. But if you ever need help, don't hesitate to ask. I ... ... no, it's not like I'm completely out of the loop, either.” Minamida said, glancing at the case that housed Alan.

“Hmm, thank you very much.”

Once the situation was settled.

“Sister!”

“Alea?”

Alea ran over to Loretta and hugged her, tears oozing down her face. “Thank God ... ... you're safe ... ...”

“ ... ... I'm so sorry I worried you. I'm sorry Alea, and Melissa too.”

“Duh?” Melissa made a cute noise behind Alea's back.

“That's okay. I didn't know Minamida was here too.” Loretta and Minamida looked at each other

and smiled, their cheeks slightly red.

“Oh, Loretta-san! Minamida-san!” Shou followed, coming over with M on his shoulder and Loretta's eco-bag in his hand. “Uh, well, I'm not sure about ... ..., but it looks like it's all good, right?”

Loretta and Minamida nodded in agreement as Shou looked at the case containing Alan.

“I'm sorry, Shou-kun. I'm sorry you got hurt like that.”

“What? Oh, no, no, it's nothing serious. Hahaha.” Shou smiled, though his cheeks were still swollen.

“Thank you so much, Shou-kun. For protecting Alea from that guy.”

“Oh no, I didn't know he was Loretta-san's ex-husband, I was so rude ... ...”

“It's okay, it's okay. Anyway, Alea, did you thank Shou-kun properly?”

“What? No.”

“No, you didn't. You have to tell Shou-kun.”

“What, what?” Alea was pushed back by Loretta. She was placed face to face with Shou, but Alea didn't look at Shou, instead she blurted out. “Oh, thank you for saving my life that time, ... Oh, thanks for that, Shou.”

“Yeah. You're welcome.”

Shou, Loretta, and Minamida all smiled happily at Alea, who was clearly embarrassed.

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“Oh dear, ..., I'm totally in trouble with that guy.”

That evening. After safely transporting Alan, Minamida was sipping tea and sighing in the comfort of his living room. As for the theft of the supplies, it turned out that the culprit was Alan, who had stolen them for cash and used them as bribes to the relay station staff. It also turned out that the unnatural gap in the container was a space where Alan had removed the packing material when he snuck in.

M, F, K, and D, the four Cabbits, were listening to his complaints.

“? Who is that person~?”

“I mean the person who brought Alan-san here, F-chan.” M answered F's question, and K took over to speak.

“Perhaps he was lured here by passing on information. Otherwise, there's no way he could have

known about this top-secret plan and infiltrated the Earth, which is even more heavily guarded.”

At these words, D nodded silently.

“Oh, I see, I see~! But that's exactly what I'm expecting from Shou-onii-chan, isn't it!”

“Well, this will reduce the damage to us for a while, won't it?” M looked at Minamida's face with a mixed expression, then smiled and said so. “I can't say I'm happy about it, though, considering how hard Kukoma-kun has worked.”

“If you know that, you should help him. You've done so much for so many people, and now it's your turn to do it for him. Good luck with that.”

“Yeah. That's true too.” Minamida chuckled and drank the tea from his teacup.

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“Huh~? Someone like that was here on Earth~?”

“Alea ... ..., I'm glad you're okay.”

“That's true, and I'm glad Shou wasn't hurt too badly.”

It was the day after the fiasco with Alan.

Dird and the girls, including Pī and Piyo, had come to visit Shou as usual during the summer vacation, and while they were all preparing lunch, Shou and Alea told the others about yesterday.

“Haha, thanks guys. No, but it was scary.”

“That time, Shou ran into me out of nowhere, and even I was scared.”

“Hmm. But Alea, you were happy that Shou came to your rescue, weren't you?”

“No! What are you saying out of the blue, Palty?”

Shou laughed along with her.

“Damn it! I'm going to get ready for dinner now!” Alea moved her hands as if she was trying to hide her embarrassment.

Shou and the others were warmed by this very

funny scene...

“Palty, can I have a word?” It was Miron's voice that came from the cruiser house.

“? Sensei? Yes, what is it~?” Palty replied, and as Shou and the others looked over, Miron lightly jumped off the cruiser and walked straight over to them.

“I'm sorry, but can you follow me for a minute?”

“What? Well, it's me, right? Right now?”

“Yes, it's Minamida. He said it's important.”

“From Minamida-san? Yes, I understand.”

It appeared that Minamida had some business to attend to with Palty, so Shou and the others said to each other.

“Palty, just leave this to me.”

“Yeah, yeah! We'll make something delicious for you!”

“But it's unusual for Palty to be invited to Minamida, isn't it?”

“Have a good day, Palty.”

“Thank you all for ... ... I'll leave this one to you then.” Palty bowed lightly and started walking towards the jungle with Miron.

“Good! Then everyone, let's work hard for Palty!”

“Oh!”

“Heehee.”

“Yeah.” Each of the girls replied cheerfully to Shou's motivational words.

But then... Shou and the others didn't get to see Palty for a while.

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“... ... Hmmm, Palty is late, isn't she?” Shou mumbled.

The sun was already starting to set. It had been a long time since Palty had left with Miron, but there was no sign of her coming back yet. Even though they had already started making dinner, not lunch.

“I wonder what's wrong with Palty?”

“Maybe she's in trouble with Minamida and Miron.”

“Maybe it's ... ... possible.” They were all worried.

Just then, a girl came running up from across the beach. “Everyone~!”

“Huh? Karutia-san?”

It was Karutia. When she reached Shou and the others, she put her hands on her knees to catch her breath, then, with her hair slightly disheveled, she began to speak impatiently. “Ta, this is serious. Actually, our intelligence department here has grabbed some information ... ...”

“Information?” Shou and the others shouted in unison.

Karutia nodded uneasily and said, “Yes ... ... Well, I heard that Palty's mother has been arrested ... ...”

“... ...What?” Shou and the others were naturally astonished at that.

“Ee~ Arrest ～～～～!?”

“Oh, come on, seriously? That means Palty was called in!”

“Maybe it's ... ... to talk about it.”

“Ka, Karutia-san! What do you mean by that?

“Huh!” Perhaps frightened by the reaction of Shou and the others, Karutia shivered for a moment, then backed off slightly as she hurriedly spoke the rest of the story. “Yes, yes, I'm still in the process of checking. But, you know, I'm pretty sure that the information is correct ... ... Such as ... ...Palty's mother is ... ...”

Shou had met Palty's mother once, albeit through a monitor. That's why the story about her being arrested seemed so graphic to him, and a sense of surprise and fear came over his body at the same time.

“Hey Shou, let's go to Palty's house.”

“Oh, yeah, that's right. Yeah, let's do that!”

“This is going to be a big deal, isn't it?”

“Palty ... ... is okay, I guess ... ...”

Shou and the others thanked Karutia, and they all headed straight for Palty's house.

But... “I'm sorry, ... Please leave me alone for now.” That was the only word that came from the other side of the door. She never appeared in front of Shou and the others.

“... ...Palty.”

“Do, do you think she'll be okay?”

“... ... I guess we'll have to leave today.”

“... ...Yes. Shall we come back?”

“Piyo.” “Piyo?”

That day, Shou and the girls could do nothing but go home ... ...

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The next few days passed. During that time, Palty did not show up at Shou’s even once.

It was the first day of school during the summer vacation. Shou was able to meet Dird, Alea, Apuesta and his classmates, but Palty never showed up.

“Hey, good morning. I heard about you, Shou.”

“Oh, ... Mike.”

“It looks like Palty is in trouble. But don't you think you should be the one to support her in times like that?”

“I should?”

“Yes, you should. That's when a man should show his stuff. Hey, Ichiro!”

“No, it's not for me to ask, ... But you shouldn't be too depressed, Shou-kun.”

“... ... Yeah. That's right. Thank you, Mike, Ichiro-kun.”

After that conversation, Miron came into the classroom. In fact, Miron hadn't been seen by Shou and the others since the day Palty stopped coming, so it had been a while since they had seen each other like this.

So, Shou couldn't help but stand up and call out to her. “Ah, ...Miron-sensei!”

“Hm?”

“It's Miron Sensei!”

“Oh, Miron!”

“Miron Sensei ... ...!”

Shou wasn't the only one. Dird, Alea, and Apuesta also stood up, and the four of them crowded

in on Miron.

“Hey, what's with you guys? You all look so scary in the morning!”

“No, it's because of Palty.”

“Hmm? Oh, you mean that. Well, it seems that Minamida is taking care of the matter of the girl's mother, so there's no problem. But you should sit down quickly. I've still got a lot of work to do, and you're forcing me to come here just because it's the first day of school.”

“Yeah, I see what you mean. But I was wondering about Palty ... ...”

“That's right, Sensei! Palty, she hasn't been here at all since then~!”

“She's been cooped up for a long time, you know. She won't even come out when I go to her house.”

“Sensei ... ..., is Palty okay?”

Perhaps overwhelmed by Shou and the others talking on and on, Miron backed away with a startled “oof” and then spoke tiredly. “Don't tell me that ... Well, her mother was suddenly arrested. You might think about it. Please leave her alone for a while.”

“But ...”

“Yes, yes. Please sit down because it's okay. I'll do a little homeroom and break up!” Miron's voice gave them no choice but to return to their seats reluctantly.

It's the first day of school, and once Miron, the teacher, has made sure that all the students are safe, there's not much else to do: a quick call from Miron, checking on the progress of homework among classmates, and that's about it.

So Shou left the school in the morning and went back to his tent house, and Dird and the girls went back to their houses too. “... ... Huh, Palty, I hope you're okay ... ...” Shou sighed as he sat down on a simple bench near the tent made out of logs.

Although he was supposed to be fighting in a war, Shou had forgotten about the battle and was simply worried about Palty. When he thought about what would happen to his own mother, he was so scared that his body trembled. That was why he couldn't stay calm at the thought of Palty being in such a situation.

“Pī!” “Pī!”

“Oh, sorry, sorry. I'll give you a proper meal later.” Shou's expression softened slightly as he said this to the two birds in the incubator beside him.

“That ... ...Shou-san.”

“—What?”

Then a voice called out from behind him, and Shou turned around in a panic. It was Karutia.

“Ah, Karutia-san!”

“Um, yes, I'm sorry for calling out to you out of nowhere ... ...”

“Huh? Oh no, that's fine, but ... ... ― Oh, by the way, have you found out anything about Palty's mother since then?”

“... ... Sorry. We haven't received any more information since then either ... ... I'm sorry about that ... ...”

“Oh no! It's not your fault, Karutia! I'm sorry for asking you this out of the blue!” Shou felt guilty when Karutia's expression turned downward, and hurriedly followed up.

Then, Karutia gently looked up and said, “It's ... ..., but we have a grasp of Palty-san's actions.”

“What?”

“Until the other day, she's been holed up in her house, but ... ... recently, she's been coming out.”

“Oh, really! Um, oh, please tell me! Where the hell is it!”

“Oh my God! Oh, um, please calm down.”

“What? I'm sorry, I'm sorry, I'm sorry!” Shou pulled himself back in a panic, realizing that he had just walked right up to Karutia, who put her hand on his chest and breathed in a huff, her cheeks slightly red as she spoke.

“... ...Shou-san, would you like to meet Palty-san?”

“Huh? Ha, yes! Of course, I'd like to meet and talk to her if I can. I mean, I don't even know what I can do ... ... But I can at least listen to her, and if my friend is in trouble, I want to help her!” He said earnestly.

“Shou-san ... ...” Karutia stared into his eyes, unblinking. “... ... I understand. There is a saying on Earth that good things come in haste. Let us go at once.”

“Yes! Oh, so you're going to invite Dird and the others to join us and-”

“No. I think it would be better to refrain from inviting a lot of people to Palty-san's place right now. Since it's out of the blue, it would be a burden on Palty-san ... ...”

“Oh, yes, that's right ... ...”

“Yes. So, I think it's better if Shou-san is alone this time ... ... I think Palty-san will probably feel more at ease that way ... ...”

“What? What do you mean by that?”

“Oh, yea, yea. It's nothing. I'm just talking to myself.”

“Huh ... ...?”

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Karutia led Shou to a place - her private beach, near Palty's house.

“This is it?”

“Yes. If you take the animal track ahead, you can reach the place where Palty-san is.” According to Karutia, Palty was alone in a secluded place, and the best way to get there was through this animal track in the woods that led to the beach.

“Come on, go ahead and help her.”

“... ... But Palty wanted to be alone, didn't she ... ...?” That's what Shou had been thinking when he got here.

The reason Palty hadn't met them before was because she wanted to be alone with her thoughts. He wondered if it would be a hindrance if he were to step in. That thought made it difficult for him to proceed down the path.

As Shou shrank back, Karutia gave a small smile and said, “Don't worry. I'm sure she'll be waiting for you, Shou.”

“... ...What?”

“I kind of have a feeling about that.” The smile on Karutia's face made Shou feel a little more cheerful ... ... Shou felt as if she was gently pushing him.

“... ...Yes. Alright. I'm off!”

“Yes.”

And so Shou proceeded down the animal track. At first, he couldn't see anything because of the thick trees, but eventually, his view became clearer, and he found a small sandy beach surrounded by some rocks. It was there, in what would have been a blind spot from the normal path, that Shou spotted Palty.

“Palty ... ...” Almost hesitating, but remembering Karutia's words, Shou took a deep breath and stepped out slowly, heading for Palty.

“ ... ... You finally found me, didn't you?” Palty said to Shou as he approached, keeping her back to him.

“Wow. How did you know?”

“Because Shou's presence is easy to detect.”

“Really? Um, ... well, I'm sorry for coming out of nowhere ... ...”

“There's no need for you to apologize. But still, how did you find this place? This is my favorite place because it's a point where people don't find you unexpectedly.”

“Heh ... ... Yeah, it's a nice place.”

“Yes.”

Indeed, it would be rare for people to come here. The quiet sound of waves. The sound of birds. This is a place where you can be healed just by being here.

“... ...Palty, we're all worried about you.”

“You're not worried about me Shou?”

“Huh? Oh, yea, of course I'm worried about you too!”

“Hmph.”

He said it in a slightly mean tone, so Shou hurriedly replied, and Palty smiled happily in response and looked back at him. Then Shou noticed that Palty's eyes were red. Her eyes were probably swollen from crying. And her face is clearly exhausted.

“... ...Palty.” I'm sure she's trying not to worry me anymore. Shou felt very sorry for that and thought of various words in his head. What could he say to make her feel better? What could he say to cheer her up? He had never been with a woman before, and even his childhood friend Himeko had a hierarchical relationship, so no matter how much he thought about it, he couldn't think of anything clever to say. (Oh, shit ... ... I'm so pathetic!) But there was no way he was going to leave without saying something.

So Shou said without thinking anymore. “Palty, you know, is there anything I can do to help? Don't worry, I'm good for anything! If you need anything, I'm used to it from Miron Sensei.”

“……!”

“Seriously. I want to help you.” The words that came out of that thought were Shou's true intentions.

Palty's eyes widened in surprise. Then she ran straight to Shou and clung to his body.

“Pa, Palty?”

“Sorry ... ... Sorry ... ... Shou ... ...” Palty's hands were shaking. No, it wasn't just her hands. It was her whole body. She's always been a solid older sister, but now she's shrinking and trembling like a small animal.

And then... “I'm sorry ... ... a little bit, just like this ... ...”

The sand beneath her feet was beginning to get wet, slightly. Looking at it, Shou replied. “... ... Yeah.”

He decided to accept Palty as she was. In that quiet place, Palty was crying quietly. (I think it would be cooler if I could just hug her like this. I'm not able to do that, I'm still pathetic,) Shou thought.

─ After Palty cried for a while. “I'm sorry, Shou, it's okay now ... ...”

“Oh, uh-huh.”

Palty tried to gently pull away from Shou's chest, but...

“Oh ～～～～ii!　Pa~~~lty ～～～～!”

“!!!”

It was Dird's voice. Dird's voice came not from the animal track that Shou had entered, but from the public road, which was in a blind spot and could not be seen. So, there was no need to hide, but Shou and Palty quickly crouched down.

“No, she's not here, is she?”

“She wasn't at home, either. I was wondering if she might be out for a walk somewhere or something.”

“... ... Yeah.”

“Alright! Let's search a little closer!” It wasn't just Dird's voice. Apparently Alea and Apuesta were also nearby.

“Dird and the others, it looks like they're here ... ...” Shou judged from the voices above him, but...

“What should I do, Shou?”

Seeing Palty panicking in front of him, Shou thought that maybe it would be better not to let Dird, and the others meet Palty yet. Perhaps Palty had not yet sorted out her feelings about meeting Dird and the others. He didn't want to burden her any more than she already was, since he had forced himself on her. So Shou...

“It's okay, I'm sorry about Dird and the others, but I think we should hide here for a bit.”

“Shou, Shou ... ...”

He whispered and put his index finger on her lips to encourage her to be quiet. He could feel her heart pounding. Perhaps it was because of the close contact, but Shou could sense from the quickness of her heartbeat that not only he but also Palty seemed to be quite nervous. He hadn't been this close to her since the shower room when they went camping, and Shou started to get

even more nervous remembering that time.

“Shou ... ... nervous, are you?”

“Huh? Ah, haha. I knew it, can you tell?”

“Yes ... ... Shou is easy to understand.” Palty must have felt Shou's heartbeat, because Shou smiled shyly.

That's when it happened. “Ah! Hey, hey, it looks like we can climb down from here!”

“!?”

It appeared that Dird had found the animal track to the beach. “Oh no, they found it!”

“Shou, Shou ... ...!”

There was no way to escape from this place, which was surrounded by rocks. If they came in, they would surely find them. They thought about using the Guardian to escape, but Shou was restricted by the Cabbits, and even if they flew away, they would be conspicuous. There was nothing they could do.

“Damn it, ...!”

Just when both Shou and Palty thought it was over...

“Miss Dird! I see you're here.”

Shou could hear a loud voice calling out to Dird and the others.

“Huh? Karutia?”

“Oh, what are you doing here?”

“... ... What's wrong?”

“Good ... ... I was looking for you all. Actually, my people found Palty and ... ...”

“Palty was there!”

“Yes. And Shou-san has already been there ... ...”

“I see. I didn't know that!”

“Oh, that's why I thought Shou wasn't here either.”

“ ... ... So that's what happened.”

“Ha, yes that's how it is! Besides, it's not like we're going to be barging into Palty-san's private

place with a bunch of people, so why don't we leave it to Shou-san for now?" Karutia must be desperately trying to persuade Dird and the others. Even Shou and Palty, who could only hear her voice, could understand that.

"Hmm. I see. I get it! We'll be safe if we leave it to Shou!"

"Yeah, Palty's probably more comfortable that way."

"I can trust Shou with ... ..."

"Thank you all for ... ... Oh, thank you!" It was easy for Shou to imagine Karutia bowing her head.

A few moments later. The signs of people had disappeared from the public road above. Apparently, Dird and the others had been convinced by Karutia's explanation and had left.

"... ... ha~" Shou and Palty let out long breaths almost simultaneously. The tension eased at once.

"Thanks for the help, guys. I'll have to thank Karutia-san later."

"Yes, ...!" It was then that Palty realized that she had been huddled tightly against Shou, trying to hide. It was a scene that, from the outside, looked like two lovers huddled together.

"S-sorry!" Palty hurriedly pulled away from Shou, her face turning red as she averted her gaze.

"No, no, I'm sorry too!" With that kind of reaction, it was only natural that Shou would blush as well.

"Well, by the way, it's indeed Dird who found that animal track so soon, isn't it?"

"Yes, that's right ... ..."

"? Palty ... ... you okay?" Shou asked Palty curiously.

"Haha, yes. I'm fine ... ... well, I'm just a little upset." Palty put a hand to her chest and took several deep breaths, trying desperately to control her agitation.

"I see, you're right, I was pretty nervous. It reminded me of when I used to play serious hide-and-seek when I were little. Hahaha." Shou chuckled and scratched his head, while Palty turned her back to him, taking a deep breath. "... ... You know, Palty, if you want, we can relax here a little longer."

"Huh?" At Shou's words, Palty turned around with a small look on her face and looked at him.

"I think I've grown quite fond of this place, too. So, I just wanted to relax a bit more."

"Shou ... ..." Palty then gave a soft smile and said, "... ... Yes. Thank you, Shou."

So Shou smiled right back.

＊＊＊＊＊

A few minutes later.

Shou had moved with Palty to her house.

“Excuse me, Shou, could you wait here for a moment?”

“Oh, yes.”

After preparing tea and sweets for Shou, Palty took a change of clothes and went upstairs. She quickly changed her clothes and came down. Her appearance was already the resolute, normal Palty. “Sorry to keep you waiting.”

“Ummm. I'm not waiting at all.”

“Thank you, Shou.” Palty sat upright across the table, directly across from Shou.

Apparently, she had already made up her mind. He could see that from her expression, and more importantly, when she said, “... ...Shou, how much do you know about this matter?”

Serious gaze.

So Shou sat upright, and then spoke back just as seriously. “All I've heard is that Palty's mom is ... ...”

“I see ... ...” Palty gently lowered her eyes for a moment, then quickly looked up and said, “Shou ... I'd like you to keep this conversation to yourself for now ... ...”

“... ... Yeah. But is that a good story for me to hear, though?”

“... ...Yes, I want Shou to hear it.”

“... ...Yes. I understand.” He nodded. Then Palty nodded as well.

“My mother was arrested for violating the ... ... Gene Use Act. She was arrested for violating the Genetic Use Act, and the Human Rights Protection Act for that. Then there's the ... ... murder charge.”

“Huh.” Hearing the truth, Shou was mildly confused. It was a bigger story than he had expected.

“I also learned for the first time that I was a child born through artificial insemination.”

“Artificial ... ... insemination?”

“Yes. That in itself is not particularly unusual, but the ... ... problem is the source of the sperm and egg.”

“The source is ... ... Palty's father and mother's, isn't it ... ...?” It was an obvious thought.

But Palty shook her head lightly. “I hadn't told Shou this, but ... ... I don't have a father. My mother had told me that he died before I was born ... ... But it seems that there was no genetic link between my late father and me.”

“What? Then the sperm that was used was ... ...”

“Yes. It was from a different person.”

“... ... What do you mean?”

“As you know Shou, my mother is a very proud person. And she took an unusual amount of pride in being a collateral member of the Jurai royal family ... ...” Then Palty huffed and pressed her lips together.

Shou realized that the secret of Palty's birth was that she was a member of the Jurai royal family. He had asked Tomi about it before. “Oh, sorry Palty ... ..., I've heard from Tomi before that you are, well, a princess ... ...”

“Oh, ... that's right, ...” Palty looked a little surprised, but quickly regained her original calm expression. “You pretended not to know ... ... until now for my sake. Thank you, Shou.”

“Oh, no.”

Palty gave a small bow then continued, “But it's only a sideline. And I guess my mother couldn't stand the fact that we are descendants of someone who lost a power struggle, was exiled, and became a pirate ... ... I heard that she repeatedly asked for reinstatement to the Jurai royal family and was denied each time.”

“There's no such thing as ... ...! Then Palty's real father is ... ...”

“I don't have any details ... ... But I'm pretty sure he was a member of the Jurai royal family.”

Then Shou remembered what Palty had said about “violating gene usage laws”. Apparently, the matter of her father was a very delicate matter. That's why she couldn't ask Shou any more questions about it.

Perhaps realizing Shou's feeling from her expression, Palty said, “I understand Shou's question. Why was my mother caught violating the gene usage law? ... ... How on earth did she get the sperm? ... ... They say they are still investigating, but they have been able to identify who it belonged to. But there are a lot of problems with revealing it, and ... ... they haven't been able to tell us who it is.”

“Yes, what is it ... ...?”

“Yes. But I was told that it belonged to someone who has already passed away ... ... but ... ...” There, Palty's expression twisted in bitterness.

“? Palty?”

Palty uttered the rest with a small shudder. “But ... ..., but my mother has killed a number of people for it.”

“!!!”

“Her marriage to my father was also a cover for her to give birth to me through artificial insemination ... ...! To prevent people from finding out where the sperm came from, she chose my father, who was an orphan, and married him and faked an ... ... accident!”

The sheer cruelty of the truth. Shou was at a loss for words. From Palty's words, from her expression, he could sense a strong sense of anger.

“That's not all! Even the doctor who was in charge of insemination and fostering my mother had a hand in it! And ... ... I had a memory of it!”

“Memories, what?”

“My memories are only from around the age of six. My mother said that it was because I was very ill shortly after I was born and had to be treated in isolation, but that's a lie. After all, she thought that raising a child was a hassle.” Palty's anger was accompanied by sadness. Shou could see that as well.

“... ... And the agent was curious about my trauma, which Shou also knew was claustrophobia and that time ... ... when I lost my mind and went on a rampage.”

“Ah, ...” Shou recalled. Palty had always been uncomfortable in small spaces. Besides, he remembered that when Miron had smeared mud all over her face at the lake camp, she had become aggressive like a different person.

“On that note, I had a deep psychological scan the other day. As a result, as the investigators had predicted, they found the source of the problem in my memories from when I was an infant.” The trembling in Palty's body increases.

“Palty...if it's too painful, no more ... ...!”

“No, listen to me. And, but ... ... I have one request ... ...”

“Huh?”

Palty stood up and came over and sat down next to Shou again, holding Shou's hand with a sullen look on her pale face. “Can you please stay like this for a bit?”

“Palty ... ...” Perhaps what she was about to say would take a tremendous amount of courage for her. Palty, who was always so dignified and firm, looked as unreliable as a little girl at this moment. “... ... Yeah. Okay.” With a small nod, Shou squeezed Palty's hand tightly back.

“Thank you, Shou ... ...” There, the shaking in Palty's body lessened and she began to talk about her past, which must have been painful.

“I could see the memories as they were replayed. There I was in a small case. It was probably for childcare. What I heard ... ... was heated arguments and screams. And the next thing I saw was the bloody ... ... face of a woman who was not my mother, peering at me.” Palty took a deep breath there.

Shou squeezed her hand again.” Good luck,” he said, meaning it.

“... ... In the next moment, the sad face smiled gently, and with a gunshot, a large amount of blood from the woman's mouth poured onto my face. But a warm hand wiped my eyelids as my vision was blocked. And when I opened my eyes, ... the woman was smiling gently at me.” Palty looked gentler than before as she said this.

“Looking at that woman's smile ... ... made me feel very safe for some reason. It was as if she was my real mother, even ... ...!” Then Palty's expression twisted again.

“Someone must have tried to rip me out of the case. The woman was desperately clinging to my case. It was as if she was trying to protect me. The woman looked at me and smiled, as if to say, “It's okay” ... ... But after a few shots, the woman finally ran out of steam and disappeared from the case. And the next woman's face that peeked out was that of ... ... my mother. It stared at me with an ugly, twisted smile, as if it were looking at me with filth, as if it was covered in ... ... blood, and the last thing it did was to quickly turn its face away. The lid of the case was closed, and in the darkness, I cried out in terror, and then I lost consciousness.”

When she finished telling him the whole story, Palty's face was covered in a terrible greasy sweat.

He wondered how much pain she had gone through to tell him. How much pain she must be feeling right now. Shou felt that he understood a little more about it. It's no wonder he was so exhausted when he found out about the fact that he was stuck at home.

“... ... So that was Palty's trauma, wasn't it?”

Palty nodded silently at Shou's words. Her trauma, Shou realized, was the reason why she had lost her mind when Miron had smeared mud on her face before, and the reason for her claustrophobia.

But there was nothing Shou could say. He didn't know how to encourage her. (No matter how you look at it, you can't follow ... ... Palty's mother ... ...)

No matter what the purpose of the birth, if the mother had developed some kind of love, it might have helped. However, Palty's mother, whom Shou met through the monitor before, didn't seem to have any such thing. No matter how deep the rift is between them at this point, as long as they had a normal parent-child relationship when they were young, it would have provided Palty with emotional support.

“... ... I'm scared.”

“Huh?”

Palty squeezed Shou's hand tightly. “Even if it's only half, I have my mother's blood in my veins. There's even a part of me that was raised by that mother and ... ... influenced by her and ... ... dependent on her. I am horrified by it. No matter how much I hate it, there's no guarantee that I won't turn on Shou ... ...!”

“Such ... ... okay! Palty is absolutely fine! I know it hasn't been that long since I met you, ..., but I can tell you that you are kind and caring! I'm sure you'll make a good mother in the future!” Shou spoke so passionately that he couldn't help but stand up.

Palty was stunned to see Shou like that and ... ... then smiled weakly and said, “... ... Hmm. Thank you very much, Shou.” The tear-streaked smile was still painful, though.

Still, Shou hoped from the bottom of his heart that his words and his thoughts would be able to support and save Palty, even if only a little. (Ah~ ... ...Minamida would probably be more convincing ... ...)

Minamida's words would be more convincing, as he had a lot of life experience and a simple but kind heart, despite his bad luck that could have caused him mental collapse. However, the words of a child like himself do not have such power yet.

Just as Shou was thinking this, he suddenly heard the sound of the doorbell. At the same time, he heard Minamida's voice coming from the doorway. Shou quickly looked at Palty's face. She gave a small nod. The two of them went to the door together to greet Minamida.

“I was told I should be picking you up soon, can I come in ... ...?”

“Yes, I just had a question I wanted to ask you, please come in.”

“Yeah, thanks.”

Palty sat down next to Shou, while Minamida sat down facing them. Minamida then glanced at Shou, before shifting his attention to Palty.

“Apparently, you've calmed down a bit.”

“... ... Yes.” Palty looked at Shou, a little embarrassed.

“Well, good. So, is there something you want to ask me?”

“Yes. If Minamida-san, who has lived with ... ... tremendous probability bias, were in my position, what on earth would you do?”

“Eh?” Minamida made a small noise under Palty's sullen eyes. “... ... I knew you'd find out.”

“Sorry. I was going to keep quiet, but ... ... I really want to ask your opinion, Minamida.”

“No, it's fine. Thank you for pretending not to know.” Minamida began to speak, looking somewhat refreshed. “If I were in your shoes, ... yeah, I'm sure I'd be dealing with a lot of the same things. I think I'd need a lot of time to get back on my feet.”

“... ... I see.”

“But that's normal, you know. And it's not your fault at all. Don't hold on to it too much.”

“... ...Yes. I think I understand, but ... ...”

I think I know what I'm doing, but my emotions are not with me. That's the way it is sometimes, Shou thought, worried about Palty next to him.

“As for your mother, I want you to leave everything to us regarding her future and the compensation for the victims and their families. I've already gotten the approval of the Jurai Guild. Naturally, your position will remain as it is, but you may decline the role. Of course, you will not be penalized for that at all.”

“... ... but.”

“Look Palty, you don't have to feel any guilt about your mother's actions and the victims in this case. You're one of the victims, after all.”

“But ... ..., I must have been a factor in causing the incident myself. I can't believe I'm going to live my life without caring about anything like that ... ...!”

For the victims and their families, the most effective way to relieve their resentment towards Palty's mother would be to get rid of Palty, the person who had done so much to get her. Palty was worried about her own life. Shou could see that.

“Isn't that against the will of the person who tried to help you?”

Palty huffed and opened her eyes. “You were trying to ... ... help me? You mean that person's ... ...?”

Minamida nodded, and Shou could guess that this was the person Palty had mentioned earlier.

“She was a so-called mole doctor who dealt with the bottom rung of the pirate ladder. But she was quite a character. Her neighbors and patients trusted her, and she was well-liked. In addition, she had studied at the academy for a short time, so she must have been a skilled doctor.”

“Was that person like ... ...?”

“Yes. Your mother was so desperate to have a child that she decided to undergo artificial insemination. But the more she got to know your mother, the more she questioned her motives for insemination. And as she did some research, she realized the source of the sperm that was brought in for insemination ... ...”

“... ...Once she realized that, she should have just left me alone and run away. Originally, my mother was the one to keep her mouth shut when it was all over ... ...”

“But she knew that your mother was going to do that even before she knew the truth.”

“!” Shou and Palty are both astonished.

“So ... ... why then?”

“She had many other patients to take care of. But there was something more that bothered me about you.”

“Things that bothered you ... ...?”

To Palty's question, Minamida nodded and continued. “How your mother feels about you being born as a tool. Whatever your mother's intentions were in giving birth to you, she thought it would be fine as long as she loved you. But ... ..., at least at that point, all your mother had was a sense of honor. She told them to use sleep study and memory implants to rapidly grow you up to about six years old.”

“... ...That woman is ... ...!” Palty's expression was again filled with anger.

“Knowing your mother's thoughts on such matters, she decided to entrust you to a certain family. The owner of the sperm that was used to artificially inseminate you - your father was already deceased, but that family is still alive and well.”

“What? In my father's ... ... family?” Palty was surprised; it seemed to be a surprising fact to her. “... ... Huh? I don't know why I never questioned that before ... ... I didn't think so.”

“Oh. It's been ingrained in your deep psyche to not ask questions about your father.”

Palty was shocked, but her eyes were sad as she quickly accepted the truth. “... ... That's right. Knowing what you've been through, it's not surprising.”

“But it seems that it wasn't easy for her to get in touch with your father's family back then. Even if she had been able to contact them in the first place, they were unlikely to protect a child born that way ... ... In the journal she kept, she wrote words of regret and apology for carelessly giving birth to you, you know.”

“No way ... ...”

“And, you know, even if I couldn't leave you to your father's family and you had to live with your mother, hopefully, you would be happy, that's what was written at the end of the journal.”

“ ... ... Why?”

Shou was slightly flustered, but he couldn't interrupt her, so he just had to stand next to her and watch her.

“Why are you doing that much for me? What am I supposed to do ... ...?”

“First of all, you have to break the bond with ... ... your mother. The reason you feel so indebted to the victims and the bereaved families is because deep down you want to bond with your mother. You want to feel connected to your mother by standing in the face of the victims and

their families.”

“I am ... ...” Palty froze in shock at Minamida's words, her anxious expression resembling that of a small child who had wandered off.

“This is for the sake of the victims and the bereaved families, as well as for your mother's sake. It is unfortunate for the bereaved that they have the wrong target to hate. Obscuring the criteria for hatred will spread hatred, and eventually everything in the world will seem hateful. It will not only make the bereaved unhappy, but also those around them. And taking away the achievements that they enjoy from your existence will be revenge for the bereaved.”

Hearing this, Shou immediately understood what Minamida was trying to say. “Wait a minute! Does that mean you're going to take her mother away from ... ...Palty, you mean you're going to take her away!”

“Kukoma-kun. To her mother, Palty is like a drug. The money and honor that she can enjoy from it is a pleasure for her, and she is dependent on it.”

“Just because it's such a ... ..., ...!”

Next to Shou's confusion, however, Palty said quietly. “I understand ... ... Please do so.” More large tears spilled from Palty's eyes.

Seeing this, Shou's feelings rose even higher. “Minamida-san! But that makes Palty really happy...”

When Shou was about to shout so. Palty grabbed Shou's hand and squeezed it tightly. It was as if she wanted him to say no more.

“... ...Palty?”

“It's okay, Shou, thanks for being mad for me ... ...”

With that being said, Shou couldn't say anything else. “... ... I'm sorry, Minamida. I got mad at ... ...”

“No, it's okay.”

Shou took a deep breath to calm himself and sat back down.

In the slightly tense air, Minamida asked Palty. “Palty, you asked me earlier what I would do, didn't you?”

“... ... Yes.” Palty nodded, still crying, but looking calmer.

“Well, let's talk a little bit about the past: ... ... My parents - especially my mother - were troubled by this unhappy nature ... ... or characteristic of mine. Well, bias in probability is naturally occult on Earth, and in fact, I only thought that I was unlucky. But I didn't have a Guardian at that time. I was born into all sorts of mortal danger.” Minamida said nostalgically; Shou and Palty listened

quietly.

“But it seems that most of the injuries were caused by the carelessness of the adults, so no one thought that I was the cause of it. But I was injuring myself so much that people were wondering if I was born under an unlucky star. After I started crawling, cuts, scrapes, bruises, and other small injuries that didn't require a trip to the hospital were a regular occurrence. It was only once a month that I was rushed to the hospital with a serious injury, sometimes an injury that could have killed me. This went on for so long that ... ... my parents seemed to have realized that the cause was me. After that, I went to shrines and temples, exorcisms, and eventually I was on the verge of resorting to a dubious new religion, ..., but by that time I seemed to have become a celebrity in many places. I guess I knew that if I messed with them carelessly, I would get hurt. I heard that the people who approached me for money avoided me.”

“Well, that's ... ... spectacular.”

“Such a past is ... ...” Both Shou and Palty were aghast.

“Well, because I was in such a state, rumors spread that if you were with me, you'd get caught up in misfortune, and of course, the neighborhood kids stopped playing with me altogether. I still remember that time very well. Until I started kindergarten ... ... I was all alone all the time.”

“I see ... ...”

“Yeah. How do you think I found a kindergarten that would let me in? I think it'll be easier to talk about why later, so I'll just keep talking for now.”

Shou and Palty nodded; Minamida nodded and continued. “So, on my first day at the park, I met a ... ... very important friend who changed my life.”

Shou and Palty's faces brightened a little as Minamida looked pleased.

“That guy was very proactive in talking to me. We got to know each other so well that we went to his house that day. I met his sister and mother there. They knew about my constitution, but they weren't scared or creeped out by me at all. On the contrary, her sister became like a protector for me. She even stood up to kids who bullied me and adults who spread rumors about me ... ... Haha. She was very brave, like a fierce tiger. I'm still the same, but anyway, I'm grateful to him for helping me grow up.”

“Minamida, ...”

“You have a good connection ... ...”

Minamida spoke happily, and both Shou and Palty were equally pleased. And they guessed at the same time. Shou and Palty were equally happy to hear that Minamida's friend's sister was the one who was still supporting Minamida.

“Yes. So, in the village where my friend lives, they are all related. They welcomed me with open arms. My mother told me later that when she went to her friend's house to thank her, she was so

grateful and relieved that she burst into tears. It was because of the support of the people of that village that I and my family were able to walk this far without straying from the path."

That's a good story, Shou thought honestly. And it must be the same for Palty. Shou felt that way as Palty smiled and listened to him.

Minamida said, "And - I'm sure that the people in that village for me are also there for Palty."

"!" At Minamida's words, Palty gasped and looked at Minamida.

"I grew up with the support of the people of my village, and eventually I got to go into space. And once I was in space, I met many more people who also supported me. And don't we have such people here for Palty? Kukoma-kun, Dird, Alea, Apuesta, Miss Miron, Tomi and the rest of the islanders, and of course me, and... she's one of them." Minamida then reached into his pocket and produced a translucent plate the size of a business card.

" ... ... What's this?" Palty asked as she accepted the plate and stared at it.

"It's a copy of the journal left by that lady doctor who tried to help you."

"! The doctor?"

"Yeah," nodded Minamida. "If you read it, you'll understand why she acted the way she did. Then again, it wasn't for nothing that she tried to contact Palty's paternal clan."

"Huh? Well, what's that all about?"

"As you might have guessed, the family of the one who fathered you is the royal family of Jurai. I can't tell you the details yet, and I'd like this story itself to stop here for now ... ..." Minamida looked at Shou and Palty alternately and stopped speaking.

Shou and Palty looked at each other, nodded at each other, and answered at the same time. "Yes."

With that reply, Minamida nodded and resumed his story. "The reason why we found out Palty's identity is because Jurai's clan was actually searching for you in secret when they were contacted by the doctor. But the doctor who contacted them died and they were left in limbo. It was only after I went up into space to ... ... that they started to make any progress, but it wasn't until recently that they were able to find any clues. In any case, the place where the doctor was is a bit of a mess."

"A troublesome place?"

Shou couldn't imagine what it would be like; Minamida answered. "Yeah. It was in Big da Ruma."

"What? Oh, you mean the home of the Da Ruma guild?"

Palty was surprised, and Shou was quick to interject.

“Well, I think that guild is the place where Apuesta was, right?”

“Yes. It was the largest pirate guild at the time, and its home base was a planet-sized fortress ship called the Big Da Ruma. It was constantly on the move, and its route was a well-kept secret that even the guild's executives were not informed of, and it was also known as a ghost ship.”

“Wow~ ... ... So, it's no wonder it was so difficult to make contact with it.” Palty nodded; then she turned to Minamida and said, “By the way, how did the GP side manage to find it?”

“Hmm? Yeah, ... it was, well, it was just a coincidence.”

“Huh?”

Minamida chuckled but spoke the truth. “Actually, ... my ship got a new power-up item, and when we made the first long jump of its test voyage out into normal space, we ran into it by accident.”

“What? You mean that was true? Palty was indeed taken aback by that and shouted out loud without thinking.

“Haha. Everyone on board was surprised at that time, including me.”

“Well, that's just bad luck or good ... ... luck again, but from our side, it's inexcusable ... ...”

From their conversation, Shou somehow understood the greatness of Minamida. “But were you okay with suddenly encountering such an amazing ship? It was just a test voyage, wasn't it?”

Shou's question was answered by Palty. “Because Minamida-san's ship is not normal. The power-up item is probably something Jurai-related, right?”

“That's what I meant. So, it's good that we were finally able to investigate, but as expected, it took a long time to examine a large planet-sized ship. It was about twelve hours before they arrested your mother that they found the logbook and discovered where the doctor had been living.”

“Because Jurai was doing a background check on me, right? That's why the journal and my findings connect so quickly to ... ...”

“Yes. So Palty, you have two options.” Minamida's voice sharpened. “One is to continue to fight here on Banjō Island as the Guild's representative. And the other is - you can either decline to be the representative and be a member of the Jurai royal family.”

After hearing those words Palty was ... ... speechless for a while, and so was Shou.

“It's Jurai's idea. It's already been approved by the Supreme Council. The choice is yours.”

At Minamida's slightly softened expression and voice, Palty fumbled for words, still in a panic.

“What, what? Oh, um, I'm ... ..., but I'm not ... ... No, more importantly, why did Jurai, who did

not accept my mother's request for belonging, take me and others? Is it still ... ... because of my father's genes?"

"No, that's not it. It's just a front to say that she saw what you've been doing and decided that you have the qualities to be a member of the royal family ... ... She simply wants to meet you. She read the doctor's journal - and received her thoughts. She wanted to make you happy, that's what she thought."

"So ... ... became ... ..." Tears spilled from both of Palty's eyes again. However, Shou and Minamida both knew that these were different tears than the ones from earlier.

"I said earlier that there were two options, but the difference is whether we go over there right away or after the battle is settled. Of course, there's also the option of not going, but ... ... I'm sure you wouldn't choose that, would you? Anyway, you have a lot of friends who care about you. There are many people who will support you. Even if the bond with your mother is severed, you can weave new bonds. Besides, children will leave their parents one day and create their own world. Your life is just beginning. And the same can be said for your mother."

"!"

"No matter how long it takes, if your mother can repent and atone for her own sins, she can even weave a bond with you again."

"Yes! That's right, Palty!"

Palty nodded tearfully at Minamida and Shou's words. "Yes," she replied, nodding again, and again.

"Now, ... then, I know I'm supposed to be out of your way, so it makes sense for me to just go home, but ... ... leaving you alone with Shou-kun again is a bit much for Miss Miron, Dird and the others."

"... ...Yes. I understand. But can you wait just a little longer?"

"Okay. I'll wait outside then." Minamida agreed and quietly got up to leave the room.

Then only Shou and Palty remained.

"Palty."

"Shou ... ..." From Palty's expression, she no longer felt as fragile as before, as if she would break if he touched her. Shou could see that there was a strong life force in her eyes. "Thank you, Shou."

"Huh? No, I'm not doing anything really."

"No. I feel like everything has changed since Shou searched for me and came to ... ... me."

"Since I came?"

“Yes ... ... I feel very strange. I have lived in a civilized society that is much more advanced than this Earth, and yet I feel like I am learning many things here that I never knew before. I'm sure that's due in large part to my encounter with Shou.”

“Well, I'm a little embarrassed to hear you say that. But it's the same for me.”

“The same, huh?”

“Yes. Palty and the others are very similar to us earthlings in appearance, way of thinking, and personality, right? From my point of view, you girls are just like the aliens in the stories. I used to think that there were no such people, but when I met you, I was moved by the fact that such things could happen. Oh, I'm sorry if I offended you!”

“Hmm, no. I think it's kind of a cute idea.”

“Yeah, I guess so. But, you know, the fact that me and Palty and the others met like that, it's like a miracle if you think about it normally. I mean, other than me, people on Earth never get to meet people from outer space like this.”

“Yes, that's true ... ... ― Shou, what would you think if we were the only ones in the universe?”

“Huh?” Shou replied, pondering the question. “... ... lonely, I guess? I mean, if that's the case, I might think it's boring.”

“Hmm. I'm sure they thought so too.”

“'They'?”

“They are the people who lived during the period known as the Great Prehistoric Civilization. They realized that their civilization was beginning to decline, so they implemented something called the Seed Project.”

“'The Seed Project'?” Shou quickly asked back as the words came out unfamiliar.

“Yes. Almost without exception, the main goal of all living things is to preserve their own species. So, when they became aware of the decline of their own species, they decided to regenerate their own species in the galaxy. That is the Seed Project.”

“Heh, ... It looks like you're studying the history of the universe. What exactly did you learn about that?”

“Hmm. Are you interested in that? It's a grand thing, starting with changing orbits, planetary modification, the development of life forms, and encouraging the development and evolution of the human species.”

“Huh? You can do that?”

“The result is what we are, you know. Of course, there have been far more failures ... ... Recent research suggests that there must have been trillions of ships, large and small, sent into space by

the Seed Project. “

“That many? It's amazing. I wonder if it's just a case of shooting a few bad shots ... ...”

“And there are a lot of higher life forms in the galaxy that don't look like us. And it's amazing that half of them is the result of the Seed Project, which is different from the great prehistoric civilizations. Some of them are even from other galaxies.”

“Oh, ..., the scale is so huge that it doesn't seem real at all.”

“Hmm. Now it's highly likely that similar things are being done all over the universe. Oh, and one more thing, Shou, how long do you think we live?”

“Huh? Umm, hmm? Even for us earthlings, it's amazing if we can go a hundred years old, so ... ... I guess...for Palty and the others, double that, like two hundred years?”

“Unfortunately, no. Now, I can live for a thousand years or so without having to do anything.”

“Really!? A thousand years?”

“Two thousand years if you apply Bio-Enhancement. Some people have already lived for tens of thousands of years.”

“Wow! I can't even imagine what that would be like ... ... Hahaha ... ...”

“That's how little generational change we've had, and how little our consciousness has changed. We don't change as drastically, but our lifespan as a species is longer, so we have a greater chance of meeting other species, just like I met Shou.”

“Ah, I see ... . That's true, if you can live that long in such an amazing civilization, isn't it?”

“That's what I mean. But I'm not ... ..., and I'm sure Dird and the others aren't either, but after coming to Earth like this and meeting Shou. I'm sure we're changing. And for the better.”

“What, change?”

“Yes,” Palty nodded and gently placed a hand on her chest. Then, taking a breath, she told him, “So, ... please let me thank you. Thank you, Shou.” There was no longer a dark shadow on Palty's face as she smiled at him.

“You're welcome! Thanks to you too, Palty.” Shou smiled just as brightly.

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A few minutes later, Shou stepped outside by himself. “Minamida-san. I'm sorry, please wait a little longer.”

“Yeah, I know. It takes time for a woman to get ready, you know.”

As if to rebuke Minamida's snarky line, the Cabbits immediately replied, “Miah!” One of them tapped Minamida on the head with her ear.

“Huh? M and the others were there too?”

“Yeah. As expected, Palty wouldn't want a lot of people to hear that story. I asked them to wait outside.”

“I see. By the way, Minamida-san, you're always with M-san and the others.” As Shou crouched down, a Cabbit hopped over to him. Somehow, Shou knew it was F, so he gently patted her head. Then F's face beamed with happiness.

“Hmmm... I guess so. Since they already know who I am, I guess I can tell you.”

“Huh? Tell me what?” Shou questioned, and each of the four Cabbits nodded.

“Actually, you see, I'm having the girls correct the bias in the probabilities.”

“What? Oh, what do you mean?”

“Well, ... to put it simply, I'm having my spectacularly bad luck offset by the good luck of the girls. If I didn't, I would have caused a ruckus involving Kukoma-kun and the others.”

“I see ... ... So that's what happened.”

“Yeah. For now, I'm having at least one of them stay with me at all times. As long as the other three are in the middle range of the island, there's no danger of involving anyone else in it. Well, sometimes all four of them can't be with me ... ..., like when Kukoma is in training. In those cases, I try to stay home and stay put.”

“Wow... ... When I heard about Minamida-san's bad luck, I didn't really understand it because I only saw you being chased by Miron Sensei. So that's what it was.”

“Haha. Miss Miron will be very angry if she hears you talking like that.”

“Is that so?” The two of them laughed at each other.

“... ... I see. So, you were trying to push Miron Sensei on me.”

“... ... Yeah, sorry.” The two remained silent and looked up at the sky for a while.

“... ... Speaking of which, what prompted Minamida-san to go up into space? You skipped that part in your explanation earlier, didn't you?”

“Hmm? Oh, yes, that's right. Actually, the village I told you about earlier, the one that accepted me, is the village where the descendants of Jurai's First Empress lived.”

“What? Really?”

“I got a GP entrance pamphlet there by accident, and the next thing I knew, I was taken to space, through the same route that Kukoma-kun's mother got.”

“I see ... ...”

“Then again, maybe Kukoma-kun has a bias of probability to follow the same path as me? Maybe I should ask someone I know to check it out next time. Or did my probability bias affect you somehow?”

“Haha. But because of that I got to meet Minamida-san, M-san and the others, Dird and the others, and everyone on the island. I was confused at first, but I don't regret coming to Banjō Island anymore.”

“I see ... ...Kukoma-kun gave me a hard time, too. I'm glad to hear you say that.” The two men, who had something strange in common, laughed at each other and paid respect to each other.

Just as they were about to break off their conversation, Palty came outside. “Excuse me. Sorry to keep you waiting.”

“Palty, are you okay now?”

“Yes. Thank you, Shou, I'm fine.” Palty smiled at him, she was already her usual self.

Minamida pulled his back away from the wall he was leaning against and said, “Let's go then. I've already contacted Dird and the others.”

“What?”

“They're waiting for you.”

At Minamida's words, Palty paused for a moment before cheerfully saying, “... ... Yes! Let's go!”

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“Oh, it's Palty! Hey guys! Palty's here! Hey, Palty!”

“Damn, finally!”

“Shou ... ...Palty ... ... thank goodness ... ...!”

“Oh, man. Damn, how much are you going to make us worry about you?”

“Why are you being so bossy, Mike? ... ...”

“Thank goodness ... ... thank goodness.”

“Ho ho ho. I guess it's all settled.”

“Pi, pi, pi!” “Pi~!”

Dird, Alea, Apuesta, Mike, Ichiro, Karutia, Tomi, the rest of the classmates, the islanders, and even Pī and Piyo.

Shou and Palty stopped in their tracks, Palty's eyes already moistening.

“Well, go ahead.” Minamida said, gently pushing Palty's back.

“Minamida-san ... ... yes!” Palty turned once and then ran off to join Dird and the others.

Palty replied happily to each of them, and beautiful tears streamed down her cheeks.

“Shou-kun and Minamida, thank you for your hard work. We're all ready for the party.” As Shou and Minamida looked at Palty and the others, Miron, wearing a white coat, called out to them.

“Miron Sensei!”

“Miss Miron, I'm sorry you had to go through all that too.”

“I didn't do much to prepare for the feast. We're going to drink until morning! Shou-kun and Minamida, come with me!”

“What? I can't drink!”

“Haha. Well, don't get too carried away.”

Thanks to Minamida, Tomi, and Miron's arrangement, there was more food than all of them could eat, and the adults enjoyed drinking, and the children enjoyed the food and juice.

Episode 2 - Paradise War Resumes

One day at dusk, a while after Palty's problems had settled down.

As Shou and the others were making dinner, Miron came out of the cruiser and suddenly put her hands on her hips and said, “We're going to the spa!”

“Huh?”

“... ... Um, Miron Sensei? Oh, is it open?”

“Onsen? You're going to the Onsen?”

“Hey, hey, Miron's whims are starting again.”

“... ... Onsen.”

“I like hot springs.”

Shou and Dird pouted, Alea looked kind of depressed, Apuesta and Palty returned with a bit of a twinkle in their eyes, and Miron said.

“Yes! Hot springs, hot springs! You guys know that there are hot springs on this island, don't you? And they finally completed a lodging and recreation facility around the hot springs! Look at this! We have to visit now!”

Miron then took out a leaflet.

Everyone stopped cooking and gathered around to look at the flyer. It was indeed a flyer announcing the completion of a recreational facility on Banjō Island and offering commemorative services for the islanders.

When Shou saw it, he said, “Oh! I remember you saying that before. Come to think of it, when I helped Apuesta with her part-time job before, there were a lot of materials to build such a facility! Wow, it's already finished?”

“Wow! I like it, a hot spring! I want to go there! I want to go!”

“Wow. It's still so hot here.”

“Only because it's ... ... hot.”

“Apuesta is right, Alea, okay? Hot springs are a wonderful thing, no matter what the season!”

Dird and the others already looked like they were ready to go, and Shou, who loved hot springs,

was getting more and more excited, thinking that Alea would come along for some reason.

But then Shou had a question. “But, Sensei, why did you suddenly think of going to the hot spring?”

“Hmm?” Miron looked at Shou, then replied somewhat proudly. “Hmph. You guys have been through a lot lately, haven't you? I just thought it would be a good idea to take a break here.”

Shou was a little surprised and at the same time satisfied.

All the girls must be exhausted both physically and mentally from the war and the troubles at home. Palty, in particular, had always thought that she should take some more time off mentally. So Shou was surprised but grateful that Miron had thought of them and made such a suggestion.

“Well? What are we going to do?” Miron asked.

The girls all looked at Shou in different ways.

“I'm good! I want to go! Come on, let's all go together!”

“Well, I don't mind hot springs either. I don't mind going with you.”

“... ... me too.”

“Of course, I'd like to go out with you.”

“We're all ... ...”

Hearing the girls' smiles and Pī and Piyo's happy cries right beside them, Shou, too, made a quick decision. “... ... Yeah! Alright! Then let's all go together!”

“Yes!” Dird threw her hands up in the air in joy, Alea giggled, “You're getting too excited,” and Apuesta and Palty smiled at each other.

“It's settled. This time, I'll be the one paying for it, as the adult and guardian. You guys are going to thank me for this for the rest of your lives!”

“Yay! Thank you, Sensei!”

“Oh, Miron, sometimes you do good things!”

“Hey! You can't say 'sometimes' like that!”

Miron grabbed Alea's head and squirmed, to which Alea quickly apologized, “I'm sorry, I'm sorry!” Shou and the others laughed at that and thanked her.

“Miron Sensei, thank you so much!”

“Thank you, Sensei!”

“Thank you so much ... ...”

“Hmm. Thank you very much, Sensei.”

“Hmph. Look at Alea. Look Alea, this is the right reaction.”

“I was just being honest with you.”

“And? What did you say?”

“Oh, it's nothing! Thank you, Great Miron!” Alea finally thanked her, and they agreed to go to the spa.

Then Palty raised her hand and threw a question to Miron. “Um, Sensei, so when are we going to this spa?”

Miron replied quickly, pointing to the flyer. “Tomorrow.”

“... ...What?”

“Tomorrow morning at nine o'clock, meet in front of the school's main gate! Make sure you're ready to go!”

“What ... ...?

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The next morning, Shou was holding the incubator containing Pī and Piyo, staring up at the newly completed recreational facility.

“Here it is. Well, it's not going to be like the luxurious hot spring inns on the mainland, but it seems to be reasonably well-equipped, so we're going to enjoy ourselves!”

“Oh!”

It wasn't just Shou and Dird who answered the call, Mike, Ichiro, and the rest of their classmates were all there as well.

Yes, Miron had invited the whole class, and it was turning into a school trip of sorts.

“Hey, I'm looking forward to the hot spring~Shou!”

“Dird, yeah, I guess so.”

With Dird smiling next to him, Shou laughed as well and looked at the recreational facility.

The three-story inn was about the size of the school building that Shou and his friends attended. It was not a large inn, but there was still plenty of room for them to stay.

The building was brand new and sparkling clean. There was also a small garden, and since the inn itself was located high up on the island, the view from the rooms and Onsen was spectacular. Shou's excitement was growing.

“It's still summer vacation, so nothing too cumbersome! After being divided into separate rooms for men and women, we'll have free time! Take a dip in the hot springs or just relax and rest as you please!”

“Oh!”

“Hmph! Let's go!”

Following Miron's lead, Shou and the others stepped into the inn.

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“Wow~ ... ... this is a pretty nice room.”

Shou and the other boys were shown to a large room for group guests, a room that would have plenty of room for Shou and the other boys with enough futons for everyone.

After setting their luggage in a corner of the room, Mike suddenly said, “Everyone, please gather around ... ...”

“Huh?”

The serious expression and voice made Shou wonder what was going on.

Mike looked around, his eyes shining brightly. Then he said cryptically. “──Let's go peek at the women's bath.”

“What?”

It was said too abruptly. Shou and the others were stunned. Then they all thought together. What the hell is this guy talking about all of a sudden?

Mike, however, didn't care about the strange looks and spoke seriously. “Okay, guys? It's not every day that I get the chance to go on a hot spring trip with the girls from my class. It's especially rare for us to get that chance, let alone Shou, who's from Earth! We ... We, who are destined to be pirates, will not let this last chance on this beautiful planet ... ... pass us by! Today is a miraculous day that God has given to us!” Mike clenched his fists and said with enthusiasm.

“Ma, Mike ... ...!”

Many of his classmates looked as if they were impressed, but Shou couldn't keep up with the situation, “What?” He just looked around. Next to him, Ichiro chuckled, “Well, I knew you would say that.”

“But the women's baths are supposed to be lined with traps to prevent prying eyes!”

Mike smiled wryly at his classmate who stopped him. “Huh, I've already investigated the trap points.”

“What? Mike, when did you ... ... get here?”

“But if they find you, you're dead! We're up against those Dird girls!” His classmates, who were well aware of the Dird's fighting prowess, gulped and swallowed.

“Aren't they scary?”

“Huhuhu ... ..., my hot spirit will not succumb to such a thing! Even if I'm beaten, I'm sure that you guys will overcome my corpse and fulfill your purpose!”

“M, Mike!

“Guys!

Mike and his male classmates hugged each other, and Shou stared open-mouthed at the scene with a mysterious emotion, while Ichiro looked dumbfounded as ever, but also somewhat amused.

“Most women go to the Onsen first when they come to a Onsen Ryokan. Now's your first chance! I'm off then, everyone! Please pray for my safety!”

“Mike!”

“You're doing great!

“Come back alive!

“Yeah, I'm on it!

With his classmates cheering him on, Mike ran out of the room looking like a soldier on his way to battle.

... Gyaaaaaaa! ... ...

A little later, in the distance, they heard Mike's scream from outside the window.

“... ... I knew he couldn't do it.”

“Well, it's Mike, isn't it?” Shou and Ichiro mumbled and sipped their tea with wizened eyes, while the rest of their classmates shouted, “Mikeuuuuuuuuuuuuuu!” Other classmates shouted in tears, “Mikeuuuuuuuu!” ... ...

Shortly thereafter, Mike stumbled back into the room, naked and wrapped in a futon. “I'm sorry, I'm sorry, I'm sorry, I'm sorry.”

Bang. As soon as he entered the room, he fell on his face, and his classmates rushed to him.

“Ma, Mike nooooooooooooooooooooooooooo!”

On Mike's back was a large sign that read, “I'm a voyeur. I'm a peeping tom, please arrest me,” was written on his back, and in the corner was a frightening warning: “If you do it again, I'll throw you into the ocean in a fish net. Tears welled up in the eyes of his male classmates.

“Oh, they're more wary than I thought ... ...The trap points have been changed to ... ...”

Many of his classmates shuddered as Mike spoke bitterly.

“Damn it ... ..., it's still not working ... ...!”

“I had my chance, but ... ...!”

“It's too bad ... ...!”

Mike smiled at the boys as they gave up. “What are you talking about, guys? ... ... Don't give up on me like this!”

“Are you ... ... serious? You'll get killed the second time!”

“It's too dangerous! Do you want to die?

Mike was unfazed by the boys' panicked words. On the contrary, his expression became more serious. He desperately tried to get up from the mattress but fell back down. With the boys supporting him, Mike gritted his teeth and shouted. “Are you still young people? You can't miss this chance! You're not interested in the beauty of the naked body of a mysterious woman?”

“Ha!”

“Please! Release me from this bondage!”

“Mike ... ...!”

At Mike's cry, the boys untied the covers that had been restraining Mike's body.

And now that he was free, Mike said. “Shou, Ichiro! You too, who are standing there in a daze! Get hot! Get hot! Our time to shine is now!”

“... ..., put your pants on for now.” Ichiro called out to Mike as he hurriedly took out a change of clothes from his luggage and put them on.

“Oh, that's right.”

“Mike, why don't you just stop?”

“Don't be silly Ichiro.”

After he finished putting his pants on, Mike grinned at all the boys and said, “I didn't just get

beat up and come back. I saw Karutia join the girls just now.”

“Oh!”

Even Ichiro's expression brightened. Shou thought, she's indeed an idol.

“Now we won't have any choice but to peek! Isn't that right, guys!”

“Oh!”

“I have a plan. I've got a plan, guys.

“Yes, sir!”

Shou and Ichiro looked at each other, and then let out a small sigh.

Everyone sat down in the center of the room and the meeting began.

And it was still Mike who came up with a new strategy. “I know what I'm doing this time. Sure, their traps are powerful ... ... but! No matter how powerful the trap is, it's useless if it doesn't work!”

“Huh?”

“What do you mean, Mike?” The rest of the classmates followed Shou and Ichiro's reaction.

“Huh ... ... Don't you get it? It's there, isn't it? There's a place where there's absolutely no traps ... ...!”

“Oh, you mean ... ...?”

Mike said, when everyone had guessed. “Yes! The entrance to the women's bathroom! Even they wouldn't set a trap there!”

“Yes, indeed!”

“I mean! We'll go in through the entrance while no one's around! This is the best and only plan that I, an intelligent man, have ever devised!”

“I see ... ...”

“I didn't think you'd go in through the entrance, ..., that's a blind spot!”

“That's what I'm talking about, ...Mike!”

One by one, the classmates were convinced, and Shou watched appalled.

“Kkkkk. Then we hide behind a plant or a rock and peek, fair and square! What do you think? You're starting to see the ... ... Peachland!”

“Oh!”

“What the hell is fair and square, ...?”

Shou's disgust was so ridiculous that he dropped out of the circle, and Ichiro laughed as if to say, “Good grief.

“Wait, Shou, where do you think you're going?”

“What? Where are you going? ... ...”

As soon as Shou got out of the circle, Mike grabbed his hand tightly. “Shou ... ..., are you saying you're not going to participate in this operation?”

“What if I'm not?” ... ...

“You idiot! Ichiro! Don't tell me you're in on this, too?”

“Hmm. To be honest, I'm not too keen on it.”

“What the hell, ...? What's wrong with you guys? ... ...” Mike staggered to his feet, looking exaggeratedly shocked, but he soon stood strong again, holding Shou's hand. “... ... No, you can't. I'm not leaving my precious friend behind!”

“... ...What?”

“Alright! Everyone! We have to carry Shou!”

“Ow!”

“What, what, what?” While he was fumbling around, Shou was being carried by his classmates.

“Come on, let's go! They're not here yet! Now's our chance!”

“Ow!”

“Eeeeee! I didn't say I was going! Ichiro! Ichiro-kun, help me!

“Come on, Ichiro! Follow me! Follow me on the road to glory!”

“... ... haha. I'm sorry, Shou-kun. I don't think I can help you ... ...”

And so, Shou was forcibly taken away by Mike's gratuitous friendship, and he and Mike, together in good company, headed for the women's bath ... ...

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And so, the boys had all made their way into the women's bath.

“Ohhhh ... ... why is this happening ... ...?” Shou lamented as he and Mike hid behind a large rock in the open-air bath. Mike, on the other hand, had a glowing look in his eyes. The others were also hiding behind plants and rocks, waiting for the girls to come in. “I mean, why am I doing this ... ... thing, I knew I shouldn't! I'm leaving!”

“What are you talking about coming here Shou, wait for me!”

“No! I'm out! I'm out! I don't want to be a peeping tom! Shou forcefully let go of Mike's hand and was about to run when...

“Wow! That's a great bath!” What he heard was Dird's voice. The girls had finally come in.

“They're here!” Mike and the boys were getting excited. Shou had lost his chance to escape, but even he was nervous about the situation and was confused by Dird's voice.

And the girls, unaware of Shou and the others' presence, of course, eventually come into the open-air bath...

“Nnu nnu ... ... oooh ... ...! Damn it! You can't see much from here!

I can't stand it any longer! I'm going!”

“What? Wait, Mike?”

Excited, Mike jumped out from behind the rocks. As if to follow Mike, all of his classmates except Shou jumped out from the rock.

(What? Everyone is leaving?)

And Mike, who had just left was clearly upset. “What the hell?” Mike pointed at the girls, his fingers wagging... “You guys! You can't wear swimsuits in this hot spring!!!!!!”

“Huh?” Shou thought, sneaking a peek at the girls from the rocks. The only ones there were Dird, Alea, Apuesta, Palty, and Karutia. All of them were wearing swimsuits, Karutia was wearing the swimsuit that Shou had given her. Shou was somewhat relieved, but that only made him more nervous ... ...

“—Mike, is that all you have to say?” Palty said this on behalf of the girls. “You were trapped once and ... ... I thought I warned you properly. In spite of this, it seems that this time you have come in head-on. I appreciate your courage, but ... ... now, I'm going to have to punish you.”

“Huh! Wait, Palty, this is different! Its ... ... so, so! I'm cleaning! I volunteered to clean the bathrooms so that you could bathe in peace.”

“All of you! Now get out of here!

“Higyaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa!”

Alas, Mike and the others were beaten up (mostly by Palty), and when they finally fainted, they

were taken straight to the changing room, but Dird, who didn't really understand what was going on, was happy and excited, Alea sighed in annoyance, Apuesta gave a ruthless look, Karutia was embarrassed and frightened, and the remaining boys...

(... ... Oh, what? I'm the only one left!) Shou, who completely missed the timing to leave, secretly peeked at the situation from behind the rocky shore, but ... ... (What?)

Palty's horrible expression and Apuesta's cold eyes frightened him, and he couldn't move from the spot. He was shaking like a small animal.

And just like that...

"... ... ah" Shou and Karutia's eyes met, and their thoughts joined.

(Oh no!) Shou quickly hid behind a rock, but it was already too late, and Karutia walked over to him, shaking off hot water.

(Well, no more ... I'll be taken ... ... in front of Palty, and I'll be beaten up ... ... by everyone, and I'll be despised ... ... by everyone ... ...Uh, ohhhhhhhhh!) Shou was prepared for his own end like that, but...

"Shou-san, please hide over here."

"... ... Eh?"

"Quickly!" Karutia, whispering, took Shou by the hand and pushed him into a rocky crevice - one that could barely hold one child - and submerged him in hot water and turned her back to him so that she could use her body to hide him from view.

(What? What? Karutia-san? You're not protecting me, are you?)

"Oh, Karutia, you're already in the water! How is the water?"

"Yes, yes. It's very good."

"I see! Then I'll get in to ～～～～!"

As Karutia watched, Dird jumped into the outdoor bath. Alea angrily said to her, "Take your time!" Apuesta followed quietly, and finally, after cleaning out the boys, Palty came back and soaked in the hot water.

"Shou, you're going to have to be patient there for a while. I'll let you know when I get a chance." Karutia whispered, her voice directed at Shou.

"Hmm? Karutia, did you just say something?"

"Oh, no, no. It's nothing."

Staring at Karutia's shiny back, Shou was moved to tears. (Karutia-san ... ... oh, thank you ... ...

for me!) As if thanking the goddess, he thanked her over and over in his mind and Shou just had to endure there.

Then, in the quiet women's bath, the girls started to talk.

“Huh ... ...But I didn't expect them to come peeking in again ... ...I'm so sorry Mike. It was a good thing I asked our other classmates to wait for us, just in case.”

“I swear, men are so stupid, second only to Dird.”

“Wow, I'm the best!”

“No, you're not!”

“Alea, what is that?”

“But there was no ... ...Shou.” Apuesta's comment caused Shou's heart to race, and a small “ugh” escaped his lips, and he hurriedly covered his mouth with his hands. Karutia followed up with a loud “Yes, that's right!” Shou was even more grateful. But the close proximity of Karutia's back and buttocks against Shou's body, and the fact that he was soaking in hot water the whole time, made Shou feel all kinds of overwhelmed.

“Because Shou is not a man who does stupid things like Mike and the others ... ...”

“No? He might be hiding around there more than you think, you know?”

“Alea, you're being disrespectful to Shou by saying something like that.”

“Tsk. Well, but we'll have to get out early this time and teach the other guys a lesson.”

“Yeah, right~! This hot spring feels really good!”

It was nice of them to leave early. Shou, who honestly felt that way, was almost unable to move in the tight space, but it was so painful that he couldn't help but slightly touch Karutia's buttocks with his hand.

“Hyah!”

(Whoa! Gosh, I'm so sorry!)

“?”

Reacting to Karutia's adorable voice, Dird and the others all turned to look at her.

“Karutia? What's wrong?”

“Oh, no, it's nothing! It's just, there's a little bit of dust in my eyes ... ...” Karutia managed to cover it up, and Dird and the others looked a little dubious, but at least Shou's presence was undetected.

“Uu ... ..., please try not to move ... ...”

(Yes, yes, I'm sorry, yes, yes!) Shou reflected to the very quiet whisper from Karutia, feeling like getting down on his knees right away.

“By the way, Palty, you're getting more and more into Shou lately.”

“What? What are you saying out of the blue, Alea?”

“Well, you were defending Shou just now. Aren't you in love with him after all, ～～～～?”

“No, that's not what I meant ... ...”

“I love Shou!”

“No, I didn't ask Dird, but what about ... ...Apuesta?”

“Wow, I'm not really into ... ...”

“Wow. What about Karutia?”

“Oh, me? That's ... ... that's ... ... that's ... ... that's ... ... that's ... ...” Karutia was terribly flustered and dazed, searching for the right words.

Alea smiled happily and said, “You're so serious, Karutia.

Shou overheard this conversation... (This, I shouldn't be listening to this ... ...) His heart began to pound more and more, and he was inwardly very nervous that Karutia would hear the sound of his heartbeat.

“So, what about you, Alea? I heard about it. Didn't Shou help you when you were attacked by thugs before?”

“Wait, how do you know that! Well, well, that's true, but ... ... it's not like I'm going to like him or anything just because he did that for me!” Alea's cheeks reddened in embarrassment.

“Well, more importantly! I wonder what kind of privileges Shou has applied for? Isn't it about time to get the results?” At Alea's comment, the air in the room tightened a bit.

“Yeah. I wonder what's going to happen~?”

“I don't know ... ...”

“Since it's Shou, surely it's something that will stop this fight?”

“Well, yes, I think Shou-san would do that ... ...”

Shou was also a little nervous about this conversation. (I see ... ... my application, I'll know if it went through soon ... ...) If that proposal goes through, surely, this battle would change

dramatically.

“Oh! This is quite an open-air place! I like this cloudy white feeling more than anything!” It was Miron who came into the room.

(Geez! The most dangerous person in the room is here!) Shou immediately recognized her by her voice, and his head was sending out fierce danger signals that if Miron found him, he would be in trouble.

“Oh, Sensei's here too!”

“You guys are early. Well, since we've come to a hot spring, I guess we should be the first to arrive.” With that, Miron also went into the outdoor bath. Finally, Shou had nowhere to run.

(Hey, this is really bad ... ...! I don't know if I'll be able to hold on like this until everyone leaves, and there might not be any time for anyone to leave in the first place ... ...!) Shou's heart was beating even faster, and he was beginning to feel confused by his predicament, but he couldn't make any strange moves and get Karutia in trouble. There was no way out.

(Damn it, ..., I'm almost at the end of my rope hiding in here ... ...!) Hot springs. The place is small and suffocating. And then there is the close contact with a beautiful girl in a swimsuit. In many ways, Shou was nearing his limit. (What am I supposed to do? ～～～～!)

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While Shou was in such a crisis, outside the girls' bath...

“Oh, hey! Kukoma's not here!”

“What? That guy! He's still in the girls' bath?”

The boys, their faces swollen, finally realized that Shou was not there. While they were all worried about Shou's safety, Mike shouted.

“Oh my god, ... is the only one left, caught off guard by the absence of the boys, to enjoy the nakedness of the girls as they take off their swimsuits! It's not fair! That's not fair, Shou!” With that, Mike started to run somewhere again.

“Oh, hey Mike!

“Where do you think you're going?

“Of course, I am! To take a peek!”

The boys were surprised to see Mike's teeth glinting in his face. No one thought that he hadn't learned his lesson after all he had been through.

“I've already checked the location of the modified traps myself! There's no problem!”

“Keh, but what if it's been changed again!”

“I don't think the girls could have changed the traps in time! Besides, they don't expect me to break in through the same route I took the first time! Above all, ... no matter what traps are waiting for me, there is no stopping my hot and spirited spirit! I'm going!”

“Ma, Mike!”

“What a guy ... ...!

“He's a real man, ...!”

Mike started to run, and his classmates followed him, shouting, “Whoa!”

“Shou-kun, I wonder if you're okay.” Ichiro, who was the last one left, ran after Mike and the others, worrying about Shou.

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(... ..., no. I'm really, really at my limit ... ...) Shou began to feel dizzy and faint, and Karutia, perhaps sensing the change, whispered, “Shou-san?” But he was helpless to do anything about it.

“Hey Karutia, why are you just standing there like that? Why don't you come over here and talk more? I want to hear about your idol's love life too!”

“Huh? Oh, but...”

“Just come here. Come here!”

Karutia shook her head hurriedly, but the excited Miron stood up quickly and came to Karutia's side. If even Karutia's hand was tugged, she would instantly know that Shou was hiding.

(Damn ... ... and damn ... ...!) When Shou thought that, he closed his eyes and prepared to be found.

“Ngaaaaaaaaaaaaa!”

“!?”

Shou, Dird, and the others all turned their ears to the scream that came from behind the bamboo fence surrounding the women's bath.

(You just said ... ..., Mike!) Shou regained consciousness, and even he could hear the loud voice. It was definitely Mike's voice. It seemed that he had been caught in a trap set by the girls.

“Hey, that's Mike's voice, isn't it?”

“Hey, hey. You didn't learn your lesson, now you're just a regular peeping tom?”

“... ...Mike, at least ... ...”

“Looks like you haven't learned your lesson yet ... ... and it was a good idea to set the trap again, just in case.”

“Hey, hey Palty, you're scaring me with that face ... ...”

Dird and the others stood up together and headed towards the bamboo fence surrounding the women's bath.

“Come on Dird, Alea, Apuesta, Karutia, let's finish them off together.”

“Eh.”

With that, Palty pulled out from somewhere a number of small grenades.

“Don't be shy. Now is our chance to take care of them.”

With a beautiful smile, Dird and the others quietly took them.

And the first thing Dird did was to pull out the pin and say, “Yeah!” and threw the grenade over the bamboo fence, followed by Alea and Apuesta. Each time, Mike and the other boys screamed, “Holeeeeeeeeeeeeee!”

“... ...! Shou-san! You can go now!”

(... ... huh?) Karutia told him, and Shou realized his chance had come.

Now all the girls had their backs to him, and they were preoccupied with Mike and the others. If he let this opportunity pass, there would probably be no next time. But his legs wouldn't move. He was completely out of it, and it was hard for him to stay conscious.

“Shou-san, ..., I'm sorry!”

“What ... ...?”

Karutia must have realized Shou's condition, because she took Shou in her arms and quickly ran away. At the same time, Shou's consciousness slowly disappeared, ...

“Hmm... Mmm ... ...” And when Shou slowly opened his eyes ...

“Oh ... ... good, you're awake, Shou-san.”

“ ... ...? Oh, is that ... ...Karutia, san?”

When he came to his senses, he found Karutia in a swimsuit by his side, looking at him with concern. Her hair was damp, and her eyes were slightly moist. The area around them was rocky, and there were no people in sight. It seemed to be a garden-like place.

“Well ... ... me, I fainted over there ... ...”

“Yes. But I'm glad you noticed ... ... Oh, of course, they didn't know that Shou-san was in that place, so don't worry.”

“I see ... ... Um, thank you very much. ― Ah! But I wasn't there because I wanted to take a peek.” Shou raised his upper body and tried to explain, but Karutia averted her gaze and Shou realized something was wrong with him. He was naked on the top half of his body, with only a small towel on his bottom half.

“Oh, um, wow, I know, I know, I was just going out with Mike. Wow, I know. So, that ... ...”

“Eh, eeee! I'm sorry. What about my yukata?”

“It was wet, and I thought I'd catch a cold if I left it like that ... ... That ... ... is why ... ... I'm sorry, I'm sorry ... ...”

Shou couldn't say anything more to Karutia, who turned red and turned down.

The air of awkwardness lingered between the two for a while.

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“Oh my God, Mike is totally annoying.”

Dird and the others finished their restless bathing. Palty, who was changing in the changing room, said disgustedly, and Alea and Apuesta sighed tiredly, while Miron was still bathing. Dird murmured curiously, as Miron was still bathing, and a sad voice could be heard in the distance.

“Hey. I don't know if I want to look at her like that.”

“Well, we women don't understand. I've never seen a man naked before.”

“I think ... ...Mike is just crazy.”

“I didn't get a chance to take a good soak, thanks to that. I'll come back later.”

They all nodded at Palty's words. Just then, Miron walked into the changing room and said with her chest out in the open, completely naked.

“Hmph. This country is gender equal. An eye for an eye. An eye for an eye, and a peep for a peep. So now it's our turn to peek at the boys! Mmm-hmm! But first, here's a beer to cheer you up: ～～～～!”

Dird had a simple question. “Oh, so we're allowed to peek in too!”

“Stop it, you idiot! Miron is no different than Mike!”

“... ...Mike wasn't the only one with an anomaly ... ...”

“... ... Haha, I'm having trouble with Sensei too. But where did Karutia go? Did she leave first? ... ...” Palty nodded her head and mumbled, not expecting her to be caring for a feverish Shou.

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“Hey, Shof. Hi, Shof.”

“Whoa Mike!”

When he returned to the men's room, Mike was once again naked and wrapped up in a fish net, his face so swollen that it looked as if he had been stung all over by a giant wasp. His body was supported by Ichiro and others, many of whom also had swollen faces. Shou realized that something terrible must have happened to them.

“'I'm glad you're okay,' he seemed to be saying.” Ichiro translated, and Shou quickly ran over to him.

“You guys ... ... look like such a mess ... ...”

“Hani. Hohemo Hufferu Hamera”

“Nah. It's like they're trying to save Shou.”

“What ... ...? I'm not sure if it's for Mike ... ... or for me ... ...? You're telling me that you took a chance like that to save me from the women's bath?

Without saying a word, Mike gave a thumbs up and laughed.

“Sorry Mike, sorry guys! My fault for being such a ... ...!”

“Huh ... ...'s ho ho ho ho ho ho. Hi-ho-hi-ho-ho. Hi-hi-ho-ho-ho, yes.”

He was no longer speaking properly and didn't really understand what he was saying, but Ichiro translated it again.

“I'm the one who peeked. I deserved it. I think he's saying, 'I deserved it, don't worry about it'.”

Mike gave another thumbs up, and behind him, his classmates gave the same thumbs up.

The sight of them moved ... ...Shou to tears. The friendship almost brought tears to his eyes.

“Mike ... ...! I'll never forget your friendship! I'm going to convince ... ...Apuesta to buy that thing on the next purchasing day, and if she gives me the OK, I'll give it to you at a discount!”

“Oh! Henfu!”

“I think he's saying, 'thank you'.”

Shou was so excited at the time, partly because he had just been soaked in hot water, but later,

when he cooled down, he realized that it was because Mike had forcefully kidnapped him in the first place, but that's another story.

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It was the night of the commotion.

Shou, his classmates, and Miron, the leader of the group, were having a lively dinner in a large banquet hall in the facility. It was a bit uncomfortable, probably because Shou and his friends were the only ones using the huge space, but the food was wonderful.

“Hmmm ～～～～! Yummy! Shou!”

“Yeah, it is, Dird!”

Next to Shou, Dird was gobbling up this and that one after another, never stopping and looking very happy. Seeing this, Shou's appetite increased even more.

“Well, the food they serve is not much different from what we usually eat,” he said.

“But it's ... ... seasoned differently and cooked in a different way.”

“Yes, it's very tasty. I'd love to add it to my repertoire.”

Alea, Apuesta, Palty and the others also moved their chopsticks, each satisfied.

The food in front of Shou and the others was as sumptuous as that served in the famous old inns on the mainland. The fresh fish and shellfish sashimi, the miso soup made from large prawns, and the venison from the mountains all made Shou and the others' taste buds wow again and again. When he was on the mainland, he had never had such a meal in such a place, and Shou was completely impressed. He was just happy to be in a hot spring, wearing a yukata, and having a meal like this ... ...

“It's so good. I wish I could feed my mom and dad.”

Just as he was thinking this, a figure suddenly came up next to him.

“Hey Shou-kun! You guys! Bottoms up, ～～～～～～?”

“Whoa. Mi, Miron Sensei?”

Holding a bottle of sake in her hand, Miron's cheeks were flushed, and with her high spirits, she was definitely already drunk.

“Bottoms up, ... I'm still underage, I can't drink alcohol.”

“What a boring boy. But Dird and the others are already considered adults in the universe, right? Then it's fine to drink for bottoms up, isn't it?”

At Miron's question, each of the girls made a troubled face and smiled.

“Hmm, but we're on Earth, after all~”

“On Earth, they say 'when in Rome, do as the Romans do'. Besides, I don't really like to drink, so it's okay.”

“I'm also a bit ... ... drunk.”

“I can't just drink alone without Shou and the others ... ... Sorry, Sensei.”

“Boo-boo! Hmph, what?! What a bunch of boring kids!”

Miron's mouth twitched in frustration, and she went on to engage Mike and the other students, some of whom were forced to drink, leading to a huge commotion. Shou and the other students were all dismayed at the unbecoming behavior of a teacher. On the other hand, he was a little envious of Miron's free-spirited attitude.

“Miron Sensei, you're really a free spirit, aren't you? I wonder if I'll get drunk like that when I grow up and can drink legally?”

“Come on Shou, give me a break, Miron alone is a pain in the ass, but if Shou turns out like that, I won't be able to handle it.”

“Haha, you're right.” Shou laughed embarrassedly as Alea tweaked him, and seeing Shou, Dird and the others smiled as their expressions relaxed.

Just then, the sliding doors of the grand banquet hall opened, and a new dish was brought to the place.

“Wow, what's this?”

What was prepared as a dessert - was a beautiful red fruit. It looked like a large strawberry, but the employee who brought it to me said it was called “Imuimu no Kane”.

“He said it was an 'Imuimu' fruit ... ... Have you guys ever heard of it?” Shou, who didn't know anything about the fruit, tried to talk to the Dird next to him, but they didn't seem to get it either.

“Hmmm. I've heard something about it, but do you know ... ...Alea?”

“Wasn't that the name of some resort planet?”

“Yeah ... ... Planet Imuim. A planet famous for its marine resorts ... ...”

“Oh, there was a planet with a name like that. Is it the fruit harvested there; I wonder? Maybe they were sent during the previous supply run.”

“I see.”

Shou was convinced by Palty's words that the juice seemed to be from another planet in the universe, just like the Jurai fruit juice he had drunk at Minamida's house. Shou felt a little uneasy when he heard that, but the juice was really good. So, Shou decided to take a bite of the fruit.

“! Oh, it's delicious! This is amazing! You guys should try some!”

“Oh, really? I'll have some!”

“Really, Shou, that's a bit untrue.”

“... ... me too then.”

“Yes. Let's eat together.”

Crunch crunch. Each one took a bite of the fruit - each one's eyes widened in surprise.

“Wow ～～～～!　It's really delicious, isn't it!”

“Oh, it sure is.”

“... ... Yeah. I want to import this and sell it ... ...”

“That's amazing. It's sweet and sour, with a refreshing flavor that goes right up your nose ... ... It's delicious.”

Not only Shou and his classmates, but also the rest of the classmates would say, “Oh! and “Wow! and “Wow!” as they ate it, and Miron even said, “Wonderful! Miron was so happy.

Sometime later, when everyone had finished eating....

“... ... Ah!”

“Hmm? Palty, what's wrong?”

As Shou was patting his full stomach, Palty shouted nearby as if she had noticed something, and Shou and the others turned their attention to her.

Palty's cheeks flushed slightly as she spoke with a radiant look on her face.

“It's been bugging me for a while, but ... ... yes, I remember now. As I recall, the 'Imuimu no Kujitsu' (fruit of the Imuimu), even though it doesn't contain any alcohol, when eaten, can cause a very pleasant state of euphoria, similar to that of having consumed alcohol.”

“Huh? Is that so? But it can't be the same as when I drink sake...”

And that's when Shou thought. “... ... . ah, what?”

Shou's vision wavered, and he lost focus. But he was feeling nice and fluffy, which was a very strange feeling. And it wasn't just Shou who was experiencing it: ... ...

“Hahahaha! I'm starting to feel fluffy and happy!”

“Wow, ..., I'm starting to feel sick.”

“This is ... ..., are you getting drunk ... ...?”

“Oh my god ... ..., I'm starting to feel happy too!”

Dird and the others were all starting to look strange. He looked around with wandering eyes, and before he knew it, Mike, Ichiro, and the rest of his classmates were crying, laughing, screaming, lying down, taking off their yukata, singing songs, and getting as intoxicated as they wanted.

“What the hell, you guys! How long have you been drinking for? You're so weak! You'll never be as good as me! Hahahahahahahahaha!” Miron was laughing with great satisfaction at this situation, but Shou, who was experiencing drunkenness for the first time, could no longer afford to...

“... ... Da, no~. I can't sit here anymore.” Slam! Shou lay down on the tatami and fell asleep as if something lured him into a comfortable sensation ... ...

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“... ... Ha!?” The men's large room, Shou suddenly woke up and sat up. “... ... Oh, what?”

He looked around and saw Mike and the others sleeping peacefully, looking comfortable. So Shou thought in a daze for a while, and then finally realized what was going on.

“Oh, I see ... ... I fell asleep there ... ...” It reminded him of dinner time. Shou was so drunk from the “fruit of Imuim” that he fell asleep in the banquet hall. However, the fact that he was here now meant that he had been carried to ... ... by everyone, apparently.

“I'm sorry for bothering you ... ... I mean, that was delicious, but even Dird and the others were drunk, and it was dangerous. I'll have to be careful next time ... ... What?”

As Shou tried to fix his loose yukata, he noticed that a face had been drawn on his stomach. When he ran to the washroom to check in the mirror, he found that not only his stomach but also his face was covered with graffiti.

“Damn ... ...Miron Sensei did this ... ...”

He was probably toyed with while he was carelessly asleep. Shou sighed loudly, rubbing the word “flesh” on his forehead. There was also some other stuff written by his classmates, but the main culprit was definitely Miron. The only thing that relieved him was that there was no graffiti on his lower body. (... ... Damn, I'm completely awake now.)

After washing off the graffiti in the washroom, Shou threw the paper towels into the waste basket. Perhaps it was because he washed with water, but his body was chilled.

(... ... hmmm... Yes! I think I'll go to a hot spring to sober up.) It would be a nice change of pace, and there's a good chance that no one else is around at this time. Thinking this, Shou got up from the futon and left the large room for the hot spring at midnight.

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“What? It's being cleaned.”

At the entrance of the hot spring - in front of the changing room - there was a sign that said, “cleaning in progress”, but the sign added that only the “Tsuki no Yu” (Moon Bath) was open.

“Tsuki no Yu” ... ... Oh, I remember reading in a pamphlet that there is a hot spring that is open only at night. ― Well, if it's open, I'll go there.” Shou took off his clothes and headed for the hot spring with only a small towel in his hand.

There was an open-air bath where the water had been drained, and an old male cleaner was cleaning it with a brush. There was also a sign saying “Cleaning” nearby. When he saw Shou, he bowed his head and Shou gave him a slight bow.

“Uh, ... Oh, this way.” Shou then looked around and saw the back left corner of the open-air bath - there was a narrow stone-paved passageway with a sign at the entrance that said, “Just ahead, Tsuki no Yu.”

As he continued down the passage, he found a stone staircase leading to the basement. “Wow, ..., it's kind of interesting to go down there!”

Feeling as if he was having a little adventure, Shou went down the stairs with his bare feet, his heart filled with anticipation. Shou's spirits were so high that he didn't notice until the very end that underneath the signboard he had seen earlier, there was a warning: “Tsuki-no-yu is also known as 'Omiai-no-yu. (Matchmaking Bath) Note: Mixed bathing he didn't notice until the end that the note was written.

At the bottom of the stairs was a narrow, rocky tunnel with a low ceiling. Moreover, it extended quite far into the distance.

“Huh? Is it just up ahead?” What a strange entrance, but it was the only hot spring open at this time of day. Since he had come all this way, Shou bent down and cautiously walked through that tunnel.

“Oh... There it is.” A light could be seen at the end of the tunnel. As if lured by the light, Shou walked. And then... “Wow ... ... amazing ... ...!” At the end of the tunnel was a small open-air bath lit by the moonlight.

If he looked up, there was a hole in the cave, through which the moonlight was entering, making the hot water sparkle. There was also a hole in the wall of the tunnel that looked like a window, through which he could see the view of Banjō Island. It was truly a mysterious cave hot spring.

Let's go in right away. That's what Shou thought, but...

“Wow! That's quite a romantic hot spring.”

“... ...What?” Directly in front of him. He turned his head towards the direction of the voice.

And there she was, a beautiful blonde woman.

“What? Mi, mi, mi, mi Miron Sensei!”

“What? Shou-kun?” Their eyes met, and they both quickly covered their bodies with towels.

“Oh, I couldn't sleep, so I came to the hot spring, and it was the only place open! Oh, I'm sorry! I'm leaving...ouch!” In his haste to return, Shou hit his head on the ceiling of the tunnel and collapsed on the spot.

“-I'm fine. It's just a little scrape. Damn, I was in such a hurry.”

“Sorry, ...”

At the exit of the tunnel, Shou asked Miron to examine the wound, but apparently it was nothing serious.

“By the way, I didn't know it was a mixed bath ... ... That tunnel connects to the girls' baths, doesn't it?”

“Yes. I knew it was a mixed bath, but I thought there would be no one there anyway, and then Shou-kun showed up. I was a little surprised.”

“Haha, I'm sorry. I'll go back then, and you can relax.” This time, Shou stood up and tried to go back to the tunnel, being careful not to hit his head.

“Oh, wait a minute, Shou-kun!”

“Huh?”

Miron stopped Shou, and Shou turned around. “It's such a waste to see such a beautiful scenery ... ... alone.”

“But, but ... ...”

“It's a mixed bath to begin with, so don't worry about it. Look, I know it's bad manners, but I'll even leave my towel wrapped around me. This way you can go out with me for a bit, right?”

“Hey, Sensei!” Shou was forcefully taken by the hand and dragged directly into the hot spring.

“Huh ... ... Nice hot water.”

“Yes, it is ... ...”

The “moon bath” was about a quarter of the size of the open-air bath he had taken at noon, and if

you stretched your legs out, it would fill up with about four people. Therefore, the distance between Shou and Miron was very close, and Shou could not stop his heart from pounding.

(I see ... ... This place is probably for couples.) Shou understood that the small size, the romantic atmosphere, and the fact that it was a mixed bathing area probably meant that this was the case. That's why he was getting more and more nervous.

When he glanced next to him, Miron's cheeks were slightly flushed, and her face was relaxed as if she was really feeling good. Although she had covered her body with a towel, her shoulders and arms were still visible, and Shou hurriedly averted his gaze.

“Hm? What's the matter, Shou-kun?”

“No, no, nothing!”

“Hmmm? Well, Shou-kun didn't do any peeping during the day, right? I don't mean to make up for it, but you can look now if you want. Reward, reward.”

“Boom! What are you talking about? Miron Sensei, you need to be more aware of your role as a teacher, or rather as a woman!”

As Shou turned away, Miron laughed and then murmured, “I'm sure Shou-kun can do it. I thought it would be okay for Shou-kun to see ... ...”

“What?” What did Miron just say? When Shou was about to ask her . . .

“What? Shou and Sensei?”

“What?”

At the sound of the voice, Shou and Miron turned to look at each other at the same time. Then, from the tunnel on the female side, Dird was looking at them with a puzzled look on her face.

“Hmm? What's up, Dird?”

“... ... What's wrong?”

“Dird? What's wrong?”

Following her, Alea, Apuesta, and Palty also appeared from behind Dird. The girls then looked at Shou and Miron and made a giggling face.

“D, Dird! And everyone else too!”

“Hey, Shou, what are you doing with Miron?”

“Shou ... ...”

“Shou and Sensei are ... ... alone in a place like this ... ...”

Shou and Dird and the others were surprised at each other. But Apuesta and Palty looked a little sad for some reason, and Shou hurriedly made up for it.

“No, no, no! This is that ... ... thing, it just happened!”

“Shou ... ... didn't expect you to be doing this behind the scenes, ... I may have misunderstood Shou.... ...I guess Shou is a man after all ... ...”

“No, Alea! That's definitely a misunderstanding! It's not what Alea thinks it is!”

“I didn't think Shou would be a peeping tom, but ... ... no way ... ...”

“That's not true, Apuesta! Chill out!”

“Shou ... ... I'm sad ... ... that Karutia thing is not a coincidence either ... ... “

“Whoa! No, Palty, don't cry! I'd rather cry than you! I just want to cry! Miron Sensei what are you laughing at!”

“Pfft. It's nothing like that. Maybe this is the kind of thing that suits Shou-kun.”

“What do you mean by that? Oh! Dird will believe me, right! No, I don't! It's a misunderstanding!”

“? I don't know what's going on, but it's not fair that you guys are alone! I'm in too!”

“What? Whoa!” Dird threw off her towel and jumped into the hot spring, soaking both Shou and Miron with the spray of hot water.

“Wow, the view is nice and it's amazing! Hey, since you're here, Alea and the others should come too! It's really nice here too. ～～～～♪”

Perhaps influenced by Dird's cheerfulness, Alea and the others looked at each other and started laughing. Shou's expression brightened when he saw them.

“──Well, there's no way Shou has the fortitude to do that, huh!” Alea said, jumping into the bath as well.

“... ... Yeah. I can understand if I think about it calmly. Besides, it's a mixed bath here ... ...” Looking a little embarrassed, Apuesta also slowly entered the open air while hiding her body.

“... ...You're right, there's no way Shou would have a late-night mixed bathing encounter with Sensei. I was too quick to judge.” Smiling gently, Palty also entered to bathe at the end of the day, hiding her body with a towel.

“Ehehe! We've all come all this way together, right! It would be a shame if we didn't all take a hot spring bath together like this, Shou!”

“Whoa! Don't stick to me, Dird~!”

And just like that, the small outdoor mixed bath quickly became packed like a crowded morning commuter train.

“Hey, hey, guys, ...”

The girls breasts and buttocks were pressed against Shou's in an Oshikuramanju-like situation. Apuesta and even Palty didn't seem to be embarrassed, perhaps still drunk from the “fruit of the Imuim”.

“Ahahahaha!”

The excited Miron was pressing her body more and more against Shou's, and the actions of Dird and the others, who were rivaling them, were escalating. This romantic hot spring, originally built for two people to be alone, has turned into an exotic place.

“Damn, it's painful ... ...” Shou's consciousness gradually faded under the pressure of the heavenly flesh.

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The next morning.

“Excuse me...is Kukoma-kun here?” It was Minamida, who never took off his sunglasses even indoors, who walked into the large men's room. There was a lone Cabbit on his shoulder.

“Huh? Minamida-san? Um, and M-san too?” Shou, who had been folding futons with his classmates, quickly made his way to the door; Minamida raised his hand and the Cabbit responded with a raised ear.

“What's going on? Are you at the hot springs too, Minamida?”

“Oh no, I had to run an errand for you today. Do you have a minute?”

“? Yes.” Shou went out into the hallway with Minamida.

As they closed the door, Minamida let out a small cough and began to speak. “As a matter of fact, the deliberation on Kukoma-kun's application is finally over. I got the results.”

“What? Really?”

“Yeah.”

The application Minamida was referring to was about the exercise of a special right given to Shou when his powerful acoustic weapon was disabled, which allowed him to request any weapon he wanted and make rules. The deliberation seemed to have finally ended.

“So, what's the result, ...?”

In response to Shou's question, Minamida made a mysterious face... “──Yes. Congratulations.

It's been approved."

"!"

Minamida's smiling face and his words brightened Shou's expression as well.

"I see ... ... I'm glad!" Shou patted his chest in relief, feeling as if a weight had been lifted from his shoulders.

"So, how did you get such an idea through?"

"Haha, that's what I thought too. So that ... ... actually, that approval is also conditional, you know."

"What? Conditional, huh?"

"Yeah, there's another factor that's been added to Kukoma's idea ... ... Well, I'll be announcing the details of the competition in front of everyone at lunch, so you'll have to wait until then. Can you wait until then?"

"Uh, yes ... ..., I understand." Shou replied, wondering what the other element was.

"Anyway, now we're ready to start fighting again. The preparations have already begun. The preparations started today and ... ... well, I think the fight will start tomorrow."

"What? That sudden?"

"Yeah. It's a decision made by the top management that the game won't need that much time because of the content of the ... ... game. The advantage of having the game decided quickly was one of the main reasons why Kukoma-kun's proposal was accepted."

"I see. That's true, isn't it?" The two of them chuckled on the spot.

"Well then, I'll go ahead with the preparations. You can relax until lunch."

"Yes, I understand. Thank you."

"Yeah. See you then."

Minamida raised his hand lightly and walked away, the Cabbit on his shoulder also waved her ears, and Shou responded with a wave of his own.

"It's finally ... ...!" The day of reckoning was near. The war was almost over. Shou said, "Yes!" and went back into the large room.

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When Shou and the others had finished their lunch.

Shou and the other boys, Dird and the other girls, and everyone who had come to the spa, including Miron, were all gathered in the lobby of the facility. Also, among them were Karutia, Tomi, Loretta, Dird's grandfather, the Cabbits, and many others.

“Hmmm...I wonder what Minamida's important story is?”

Mike looked around and questioned, and as Shou, who knew what was going on, was wondering how to explain, Mike suddenly grinned.

“Well, I don't care about that. More importantly, you've hopefully created a chance for me to take a peek at Loretta and the others' baths ... ...Kuku ... ...”

“Mike ... ... you really never learn, do you ... ...?” Ichiro was dumbfounded but impressed, and Shou agreed wholeheartedly.

In the meantime, Minamida started talking with Mike in his hand.

“Ah. Ahh. Thank you all for coming here today. I'm sorry that all of you, especially the students, are on a hot spring trip. But I have something important to say.”

At these words, the backs of everyone gathered in the lobby lightly straightened.

“It's about the proxy war that's been going on for a while. As I'm sure you all know, Kukoma Shou-kun's sound weapon was banned, and instead, he was given special rights. He proposed to use this right to conduct a proxy war in a certain way. And I am here to inform you that that application has been approved.”

There was a mild groan, and Mike and Ichiro looked surprised, “Oh!” Mike and Ichiro looked at each other in surprise.

“To that end, I've been working with the islanders this morning to set up the venue for the proxy war. It is expected to be completed tomorrow, so the battle will resume tomorrow. Until then, everyone, please stay here at the hot spring.”

Mike raised his hand to Minamida, “Hai! Mike raised his hand cheerfully, and Minamida immediately said, “Yes?”

“What exactly is this new method of fighting that Shou has applied for!”

That would be what they all wanted to know. Many of the students were nodding their heads yes.

Minamida, who for some reason hadn't mentioned it yet, let out a satisfied “Oh ... ... yeah, that's right ... ...” and then said with a small sigh.

“Now, ... I will explain the rules of the proxy war that will resume tomorrow - the method of combat.”

The tense air that dominated the place. A unique and strong sense of tension.

Shou already knew what was going on, but he could feel the tension around him, and it made him nervous.

In such a tense atmosphere, ...Minamida finally said it. “The game method is ... ... Baseball Fist. In other words, it's strip rock-paper-scissors.”

“... ... ...” A terrible silence enveloped the place.

Eventually.

“Eeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeee!”

Almost everyone in the place shouted in astonishment at the same time. Somehow, Shou's surprise was also mixed in among them.

The boys were very elated at such an unexpected method of warfare, Baseball Fist.

“Great! Has there ever been such a peaceful, serious and extremely fair way to fight? No! Are you a genius? You could have been the king of the world, Shou!”

“Whoa, whoa, Mike!”

Mike immediately accepted the game and was so excited that he hugged Shou who was next to him. The other male classmates also said, “Wow!”

“This is the way to ... ...!”

“This is the true power of the new student!”

“You're good!”

“You might be even better than Mike!”

“Shou-kun ... ..., you're a man too, aren't you?”

“Stop it, Ichiro-kun! Chi, no! I just applied for a rock-paper-scissors game! Why would you want to play ... ... Baseball Fist?”

Yes. That was the reason why Shou was surprised earlier. What he applied for was just a game of rock-paper-scissors. It was because he thought it would be the most advantageous for him and the most likely to win. He didn't add any undressing to the game.

But then Shou remembered. This morning, Minamida had said something about conditional approval. In other words, the condition was to add the act of undressing.

And then...

“Baseball Fist? What is strip rock-paper-scissors? What does that mean? Alea?”

“It's an Earth-style rock-paper-scissors game with perverted rules where the loser takes off their clothes.”

“What? Shou applied for such a game?”

“Oh ... ..., I didn't expect this to happen ... ...Shou, I guess I underestimated you after all... ...I'm sorry ... ..., but I'm honestly shocked ... ...”

“Hey Alea, I can hear you! No, I'm not! It's a misunderstanding too!”

Dird and Alea's conversation triggered the girls to start whispering in secret.

“Strip rock-paper-scissors is ... ...”

“Lies, right? That Kukoma-kun?”

“Kukoma-kun didn't even come to take a peek ... ...”

“I thought he was a serious person.”

“He's a boy like Mike and the others. I don't like it either.”

“There's no way I'd play such a stupid game.”

Shou didn't understand the language, but he immediately understood the obvious disdain in their eyes. “Whoa! It's not like that, guys! Don't misunderstand me, eeee!”

But that misunderstanding wasn't going to be cleared up any time soon.

“Shou ... ... terrible ... ...”

“I'm sorry ... ...Shou ... ...”

Apuesta and Palty also give him a sad look. In the back of the room, for some reason, Karutia was on the verge of crying, and even Loretta had wrinkled her brow.

“Don't worry about that, Shou, you represent all of us men! Not many space pirates are as manly as you are! You should be proud of your manliness!” Mike grabbed Shou's hand and flashed his teeth with a too-bright smile.

All the girls saw this and glared tightly at Mike.

“Hey, hey guys, ...”

It was as if a final battle was about to break out right here.

“Ah~, about that ... ...” At that moment, Minamida interrupted Shou and the others.

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Then, a little back in time. It was the night before Miron's “We’re going to the spa” announcement.

“Miss Miron, I know this is sudden, but have you ever heard of Baseball Fist?”

“Hmm? Baseball Fist?”

“Yes. Baseball Fist. Do you know it?” Minamida came to Miron's cruiser house and suddenly asked, and Miron's eyes fluttered as if she was somewhat amused, but she quickly responded.

“Of course, I know. The loser of the rock-paper-scissors game takes off his clothes, right? That's what my dad used to do with his young mistresses.”

“I don't need that kind of personal information ... ... Anyway, if you know about it, we can talk quickly.”

“What do you mean? What do you mean?”

“I was surprised when I first heard about it too ... ... Actually, there's talk of deciding a proxy war on this island with Baseball Fist ... ...”

“... ... Ha?” Miron couldn't believe her ears. Then she poked her ear hole properly and asked. “I'm sorry, but can you repeat that?”

“Oh ... ...Kukoma-kun's request, you see, was to settle the winner by rock-paper-scissors. The battle had been at a stalemate for too long. The representatives of each country and the organizers got tired of it and approved it ... ... They decided that just rock-paper-scissors would be boring. Then, the organizers came up with the idea of adding a rule of undressing because it sounded fun ... ...”

“Huh? Seriously?”

“Yeah ... ...”

“ ... ... Is that for boys too?”

“... ... probably.”

“OK! I like that! Baseball Fist, Banzai! Nice work, Shou-kun!”

Minamida looked upset at Miron's sudden enthusiasm, “What?”

“Huh! Huhuhu ... ... is going to be interesting! I'm sure the game will be decided in one day, and if it's not a reasonably exciting event, there will be people who won't agree with it! Okay, Minamida, I'll do the planning myself!”

“No, wait a minute. I don't think it's a good idea to add a rule about undressing in the first place, so I was going to talk to Miss Miron about it...”

“What are you talking about! This is the best thing that could have happened! And you said the top wants to do it, right? Then we'll just have to go along with it! Of course!”

“So, if we disagree, they'll reconsider this absurd rule...”

“Shut up! That's not very manly of you, is it Minamida? Baseball Fist is a great way to give everyone a fair shot! I'm for it! You second it! It's a good idea! It's decided!”

“Yes, that's true, but ... ... is also ... ...”

“The place is ... ..., right, the big banquet hall of the newly built facility is fine! But it's boring to just do it. It's a big place and we should set up some stalls. We also need to include a live broadcast ... ...”

“Oh, uh, ... Miss Miron? Maybe you've already decided ... ...”

“Don't worry! I'm sure you'll be fine. I'll be making a proposal soon, and you can submit it for me! I'll get to work on the preparations as soon as I can.”

“... ... Ahhhh, why is this happening ... ...?” Minamida mumbled tiredly as he realized he was no longer going to be able to stop her, and then things would really go according to Miron's plan ... ...

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“That's why it's called ... ...”

Everyone was appalled by Minamida's explanation. Shou, however, patted his chest in relief, because until just now, he had felt like he was going to be exterminated socially, and he didn't feel like dying.

“Hey, Miron Sensei, you almost made me look like a pervert!”

“You're just happy to be able to play Baseball Fist, aren't you? You don't have to be shy, Shou-kun. All men are like that...”

“Aaaaah! It's no good, that woman doesn't understand me!”

As Dird and the girls approached, Alea put her hand gently on Shou's shoulder and said, “Shou, I believed you.”

“No, you didn't! Earlier, Alea was the first one to disparage me!”

“Haha, of course not. I was kidding, kidding. There's no way I'm going to be turned off by Shou.”

“... ..., you're doing great.”

Shou was taken aback by Alea, who laughed and slapped Shou's back, followed by Apuesta and

Palty, who both lowered their eyebrows apologetically and then spoke up.

“Shou ... ..., I'm sorry ... ... I misunderstood ... ... again.”

“Me too. I'm sorry, Shou; I don't know why. I got upset, and I thought that Shou would never apply for such a thing ... ...”

“Oh, um, yeah. It's okay if you understand. So don't give me that look. Right?”

“Shou ... ...” Apuesta and Palty gazed at Shou with impressed eyes. They felt as if they had done something wrong, and Shou felt sorry for them.

“Well, anyway, we play rock-paper-scissors, and if we lose, we take off our clothes, and if there are no clothes left to take off, we lose, right? It's a very simple game, isn't it? It's so easy to understand!

Dird was the only one among them who seemed to be enjoying the game. For she, who had no sense of shame, Baseball Fist may be a game that she genuinely enjoyed.

And it was the same for the boys.

“Huh ... ... Huh.” Mike smiled suspiciously, and the boys follow him.

“Apparently it was just a coincidence that we ended up in a Baseball Fist, but ... ... it turned out alright. It's all thanks to Shou. Thank you, Shou!”

“Oh, yeah, I see ... ...”

“Hmph. I never thought I'd be this serious about a game ... ... Hahahahaha! Now I'm looking forward to tomorrow's show, gentlemen!”

“Oh!” Ichiro was the only one who remained calm among the excited boys. “But Mike, have you thought about what will happen if we lose?”

“Hahaha! That's what I'm prepared for. Hey guys! Let's overcome this hardship and make the girls look like they were born by our hands!”

“Whoa!”

“It's not oooh! I'm not trying to bare your skin! Everyone, calm down!”

“There's nothing you can say, Shou-kun.” As Ichiro said, the eyes of Mike and the other boys were glowing with a suspicious light, and no one could control their spirit. They were so enthusiastic that even Shou couldn't help but be taken aback.

At that moment, Palty gently raised his hand and asked Minamida a question. “Excuse me, Minamida-san. Isn't it too much of a joke to use strip rock-paper-scissors to determine the winner? If anything, the act of undressing is more difficult for women than for men, as they have stronger resistance. I don't think it's fair.”

Palty's comment was met with a chorus of “That's right!” “Why do we have to take our clothes off?” “That's not fair!” “Why don't the boys do it on their own?” and so on.

Minamida's response to these girls was. “Yes, you're right. That's why, in order to eliminate the girls' mental disadvantage when it comes to undressing, we're going to have the girls wear more clothes than the boys.”

“What?”

“Five pieces of clothing for girls, including upper and lower clothing, upper and lower underwear, and socks. Boys only have three pieces: top and bottom clothing and underwear. In other words, the boys have to beat the girls five times, but the girls only have to win three times. That's an advantage of two fights over the boys.”

At this explanation, a murmur began to rise among the girls.

“Five to three, ..., that's definitely an advantage.”

“We have a good chance of winning, don't we?”

“That's true, but we're still in our underwear at the halfway point, and if we lose, we're completely naked.”

Some of the girls' expressions brightened, while others became more anxious. Opinions began to divide among the girls.

“Crap, ... I have to win five times ... ... until they’re completely naked. Well, okay. Along the way, there's both top and bottom underwear, as well as bra-only or panty-only states! This level of handicap is natural for a man! Hey guys!”

“Oooooh!”

“Eh, uh ... ... then, I'll give you a more detailed explanation ... ...” Confused by the boys' odd state of excitement, Minamida continued his explanation.

“The game is a winner-takes-all tournament system. The order of the games will be randomly drawn, but the combinations will be made so that the games are basically won by gender. Think of this as a way to make the gender handicap work. The handicap is meaningless if the two players are of the same sex.”

At some point, Shou and the others began to listen intently to Minamida's explanation.

“The problem with playing rock-paper-scissors is that each of us has a different degree of Bio-Enhancement. If you have high reflexes and muscle strength due to the enhancement, you can make an instantaneous afterthought. So, in rock-paper-scissors, both players hide their hands and press the “rock”, “scissors”, and “paper” switches, and the results are displayed on the monitor. This is the format.”

“Is the position of the switches fixed?”

“Palty? What do you mean?” Dird looked at Palty curiously.

“If you know the position of the switch, you can predict the move your opponent will make by subtle hand positions and eye contact.”

“Of course, the position will change randomly every time. The system is also unpredictable if it's a short term game.”

“I see, I see. I understand.” Palty, Apuesta and the others seemed to be satisfied with the explanation, but only Dird was still nodding her head, as if she didn't understand what it meant.

“Anyway, whoever wins this tournament will be the winner of the proxy war. Keep that in mind, everyone.”

As Minamida was about to close the conversation like that, Palty raised her hand again and said, “I'm sorry to interrupt you so often. I asked you earlier about handicaps between men and women, but what about handicaps between guilds due to power differences? If anything, I think that's more of a problem ... ...”

Palty was right, there were differences in power between guilds. In the previous proxy wars, that power difference was taken into account in the form of equipment performance differences.

Minamida then nodded, “Yes,” and began to speak again. “After some discussion on the matter, it was decided that Dird, Alea, Apuesta, and Palty would be given an additional three handicaps. For those three, you can wear hair clips, accessories, socks on top of each other, whatever you want.”

For some reason, it was Mike who was most shocked by that statement. “Crap! You mean I have to win eight times to see those four naked! But I'm not going to lose! I'm going to make them look like they were born ... ...!”

“Oh, and by the way!” Interrupting Mike's words, Palty continued with her question. “With that kind of handicap difference, how could the four major guilds agree to it? It seems to me that this tournament game has a pretty high chance of being a downhill battle by the weaker guilds ... ...”

Even before Palty could say so, the rest of the classmates were aware of the possibility. The girls, in particular, were weighing the embarrassment of exposing their nakedness against their guild's victory.

“Sure, this tournament system is a bit of a gamble, one loss and it's all over. However, with the previous combat system, Kukoma-kun would only be able to keep us in a stalemate, and if Kukoma-kun, who is more accustomed to fighting, colludes with the other guilds, even you four major guilds would most likely lose. Well, there was some pushback from the organizers, but above all, Baseball Fist is capable of determining short term battles.”

Everyone, including Palty, nodded without further complaint, probably satisfied with Minamida's

explanation.

“Now, even though the game has been decided to be Baseball Fist, you are still minors. It would be against public order and morals for you to be exposed naked to the public if you lose. For that reason, the rule was that you do not have to take off your last piece when you lose, and the game ends at that point.”

“Don't be silly! That's not Baseball Fist!”

But then Mike burst into tears, and Miron snapped, “I didn't hear that!”

But Minamida was probably expecting that. He explained that a special rule had been added to the game, which allowed them to play one more time if they took off the last piece. This made sense to Mike and Miron, but the girls were not happy. The girls voiced their dissatisfaction.

“Um, ..., I know how you feel, but we're working on it. We have a special “secret wall” at the venue that filters the information, so even if you lose and are completely naked, you can still ... ... hide what you need to hide. That's how it works.”

Many of the girls squealed with delight at that statement, but Mike and the rest of the men heated up again.

“You’re killing me!” Mike cried, “Shit! This can't be happening! What's the point of Baseball Fist? Put me through to the top right now! I'll complain to them!”

It took Shou and the others quite a while to calm him down ... ...

Finally, the situation calmed down and the girls, who had been hesitant to get naked, agreed to participate in the baseball fist. After that, it was announced that the tournament would be held in the main banquet hall of the facility, and the Minamida briefing, which had become a big deal, was somehow able to come to an end.

“Also, I've asked Miss Miron, who is also the main planner for this event, to be the MC for tomorrow. Please take care of her.”

“I'm not convinced ... ... What do you mean I can't see you naked ... ...?”

But Miron didn't reply, just mumbled something next to Minamida. Seeing this, Minamida gave a deep, deep sigh and continued tiredly.

“In order to make the game fairer, I have asked the people who are here to act as judges. Everyone, please take care of yourselves tomorrow.”

Karutia, Tomi, Loretta, Dird's grandfather, and the Cabbit all responded to Minamida's bow.

“Well, that's about it for today's briefing: ... ... Then, everyone, please gather at the large banquet hall in the special hall tomorrow night around seven o'clock. Therefore, you are dismissed.”

At the sound of that voice, Mike raised his hand and said, “Alright guys! We can't stay in the hot

springs anymore! Let's start training for rock-paper-scissors now! Now follow me! Tomorrow's victory is in my hands! Even the Secret Wall can't stop us! Walls are for overcoming. Let's use our innocent power to break down the dirty Secret Wall that the adults made!"

"Whoa!"

With Mike's voice, the boys ran off somewhere. At the end, Ichiro smiled and said, "I'll see you later." He waved to Shou and ran off. All the girls looked at the back of the guys with a cold "Wow ... ..." look.

"Shou~! Let's both do our best tomorrow!"

"Ah, yes, Dird is very motivated."

"It's times like this that I envy a naturally insensitive girl like Dird."

"Hey Alea! What's with that rude remark~!"

"You're being rude ... Haven't you decided if you're being rude or not?"

Shou smilingly watched the two of them joking around as usual.

"But ... ... Baseball Fist, what a ... ..."

"I'm really surprised, Apuesta, that Shou would be so ... ... bold as to suggest that we play rock-paper-scissors."

"Haha. I'm sorry I startled you. But, if we play rock-paper-scissors, we don't have to worry about hurting anyone ... ... Well, I don't know how it turned into Baseball Fist, but still, I thought it would be peaceful and there would be no regrets because the game would be won immediately."

"... ...Shou"

"Huh...that's a very Shou idea." Apuesta and Palty both smiled kindly, which made Shou feel happy.

And then Miron shouted over the loudspeaker. "Great, you guys! Tomorrow we're going to strip these men bare to the hilt! We're going to show them what women are made of! And when you get them off, take a picture of them for your permanent collection!"

"Oh!"

"Huh ... ...Shou-kun should be prepared for that now!"

"Ugh!" Shou was overwhelmed by Miron's suspicious gaze and the girls' rising tension.

"Alright! I think I'll start training too! Let's do it together!"

"No, what kind of training is rock-paper-scissors? Is it to train my dynamic vision? But the game

is switched, so what's the point?”

“... ... I think I'll do some research too. Maybe research the probability of rock-paper-scissors ... ...”

“Well, Apuesta is very motivated, Shou, you can't just sit back and wait, can you?”

“Ah, haha. I guess not.” Shou was confident at first, but the hot aura that both men and women showed made him lose his confidence.

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The rest of the day was spent preparing for tomorrow's game. However, Shou didn't have anything to prepare, but Dird and the others were a little different.

“U～～～～n ... ...!” At that moment, what Dird was staring at with a grunt was ... ... women's underwear. She had just left the spa facility and had come to Tomi's store alone.

“Dird-chan, you seem to be in a lot of trouble since a while ago, don't you?”

“Oh, Grandma Tomi! Yeah, I was wondering which one I should get~”

“That's unusual for Dird-chan, who always makes a quick decision. Are you preparing for tomorrow's competition by any chance?”

“Yes! Since I'm going out of my way, I wanted to make a spirited choice!” Then she said again, “～～～～!” Dird checked out the underwear one by one while grunting again. Tomi looked at her smiling.

“Hohoho, Dird-chan has become a girl ... ... Oh?”

Then Tomi turned her attention to the entrance of the store. There, she saw a new customer.

“Welcome Alea-chan.”

“Oh Tomi. I just came to see your underwear ... ... Dird?”

“What? Alea?”

Their eyes met. Then Alea noticed that Dird had underwear and said, “Maybe Dird came to buy underwear too?”

“Maybe? ... ... So Alea did too? Wow! We're the same!” Dird happily attached himself to Alea. Alea backed away in surprise.

“Ho-ho-ho. You're growing up, aren't you, Alea?”

“Oh, no! I didn't mean anything like that! I just thought it would be a good opportunity to buy some new underwear since I only have the old ones.”

“It's okay, you don't have to be shy. Hohoho.”

“That's right, Alea, let's choose together!”

“Duh! That's not what I meant!” Whether embarrassed or not, Alea's face turned bright red, and she denied it.

At that moment, another visitor arrived.

“... ... Huh? Everyone is ... ...” It was Apuesta's appearance. Dird and Alea were both surprised by this, “Apuesta?”

“Well, well, well, I guess we all think alike. So that's ... ...”

“Yeah! Apuesta came to see your underwear too?”

“Yeah, um, yeah ... ...” Dird asked, and Apuesta replied with a pout.

“Oh, really! Then let's choose together!”

“Ah.”

Dird took Apuesta by the hand and took her to the lingerie section. Seeing this, Alea looked somewhat uncomfortable, but Dird called out, “Alea too!”

And then.

“──Oh? Dird, Alea, and Apuesta? Were they all here?” The last person to say so was Palty, who walked into the store.

Tomi smiled, probably already expecting it, and Dird and the others all turned their gaze from their underwear to Palty.

“Palty's here too~! Now we're all here!”

“Hey, hey, ..., we're really thinking the same thing, aren't we ... ...?”

“Hey, that's kind of embarrassing ... ...”

“So ... ...D, Dird and the others came to see the underwear too?”

Palty's question was met with a vigorous nod from Dird, a sluggish nod from Alea, and an embarrassed nod from Apuesta.

Palty blinked several times, then smiled softly. “Hmm. Looks like we were thinking alike, then. Please allow me to join you.”

“Yes! Let's choose together~!”

“Huh, I can't help it...”

“... ..., but what a coincidence.”

And so, as the girls were having fun choosing underwear, recommending to each other what underwear would suit each of them...

“Hey! Tomi, do you have a minute? I've got a bottom that looks good with my nice body...”

Miron, who had entered the store with her blonde hair swinging, stopped her voice when she saw Dird and the others, and said, “Hohohoho! Welcome, Sensei, we have underwear that will suit you.”

Tomi laughed, and even Miron, who wasn't supposed to be participating in the rock-paper-scissors war, somehow became absorbed in choosing underwear.

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Time passed quickly. Soon it was seven o'clock in the evening.

Finally... the time had come!

“Ahem, are you guys ready?

Let's get started! The first round! Banjō Island Baseball Fist War! It's on!”

“Waaaa

“Wow, ～～～～! It's amazing! There are so many stalls! Hey, hey, that's great, Shou!”

“What? Oh, um, yeah. That's right. But you know, Dird, it looks like me and you are going to hit it out of nowhere.”

“What? Oh, that's right! Good luck, Shou!”

“Uh-huh.”

“Pī-chan and Piyo-chan, please watch over our match!”

“Piyo!” “Piyo?” The two birds chirped in Shou's incubator, and Dird smiled happily. Her eyes are sparkling, apparently not too interested in the tournament.

“No wonder Dird is so excited. This is a real festival situation. It's as if Miron had a plan.”

“Ugh ... ... I wanted to open a store too ... ...”

“Hmm. I guess we'll have to leave it for today, Apuesta.”

At the sound of Alea's voice, Shou took another look at the entire crowded venue.

The large banquet hall that Shou and his friends had been using since the day before yesterday was now undergoing a major transformation into a special venue for the “Baseball Fist War”.

First of all, at the back of the hall - the stage where Miron was standing was set up as a place for the participants of the rock-paper-scissors game to fight one on one. The huge monitor behind her seemed to be showing the scene of the rock-paper-scissors fight. There were many other monitors set up so that the game could be seen from anywhere in the hall.

There were also many food stalls around the venue. As Alea said, it was just like a festival.

Shou couldn't help but smile as Apuesta looked at them enviously. Apuesta turned red and turned her face away, probably because she knew that she was being watched. Apparently, she was a true businesswoman at heart.

Don! Don! Don! Don!

Such a heavy sound echoed in the hall from time to time, and they saw an island craftsman beating a large drum near the stage. It seemed to be a performance to liven up the audience. Shou was really impressed with Miron's planning.

“Yo, ～～～～! Let's get something to eat before the game! Come on guys, let's go!”

“Wait, wait, Dird, don't pull that!”

“I want to study the ... ... food system too!”

“Hmm. Let's go!”

Dird took the initiative and ran off, Alea followed her, and Apuesta and Palty, who seemed to be interested, headed towards the stall.

Just as Shou was about to go along with them... “Hi.”

“Oh, Minamida-san.” Shou stopped in his tracks as Minamida came over with three Cabbits in tow.

“Huh? Um, ...M-san, is she the only one not here?”

“Miah!”

“Haha, how did you know that without even speaking, Kukoma-kun?”

“Haha. I guess I'm kind of getting used to them.”

“I see. She's taken on the role of referee for the game. She's in the referee's seat over there.”

“Oh, it's true.” Shou looked at the center of the stage; there were several desks lined up beside a huge monitor, and M was perched on the rightmost one. The other seats were occupied by Karutia, Tomi, Loretta, and Dird's grandfather.

“How do you like it, Kukoma? It would be a bit of a misnomer to say that ... ... is what you wanted, but anyway, the rock-paper-scissors game is about to begin. Do you think you have a chance to win?”

“It's ... ...” Honestly, winning or losing wasn't important. He just didn't want to see his friends hurt each other. Nevertheless, he didn't want to lose in a game of rock-paper-scissors. Because for Shou, rock-paper-scissors was a way to push something. Because if he could win this game, it would lead to the universe.

“There is ... ... I'm going to win here! And I'm going to end this war!”

“ ... ... I see.” Minamida chuckled, then put his hand on Shou's shoulder and said, “All right, good luck. I'm rooting for you, too. Oh, that's right. I'll take care of them during the game. Then you can concentrate on the game.”

“Oh, yes. I'm sorry. Thank you very much!”

Just as he was about to hand the incubator to Minamida, Shou's hand was suddenly tugged by someone.

“Here, here, Shou~! This is really delicious! Let's go, Shou!”

“Whoa! Wait, Dird!

It was Dird. With a chocolate banana in one hand, Shou's nervousness disappeared in a flash as she took him with her.

“Haha, Miss Miron has planned it for you. You should enjoy it, Kukoma-kun.”

“Ha, yes~!”

“Pī! Pī!”

In such a festive atmosphere, Shou had to fill his stomach before the game.

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As Shou began to eat the grilled corn, the war finally resumed.

“Well then, let's start the first round of the strip rock-paper-scissors fireworks!

Hey Mike, come on up here!”

“Huh, looks like it's my turn now!” Mike walked onto the stage with his blond hair brushed away with his hand, giving off a rude vibe, while his male classmates cheered furiously, and the girls droned on.

“Oh, guys. Looks like it's about to start.” Shou called out, drawing the attention of Alea and the others to him.

“Wow, first up is Mike. Haha, that'll be interesting to see.”

“... ..., I hope he loses quickly.”

“I don't know, I'm a little nervous too.”

“Squirming?”

But Dird was the only one with a mouth full of food, so they couldn't understand what she was saying.

Then Mike's opponent came up, a certain girl who was a classmate with her hair in a ponytail. She was glaring at Mike with a sharp gaze.

“Mike, you better brace yourself. I'm not going to let you take off a single piece of me.”

“Huh ... ... Will it work out that way?”

“What do you mean?”

Mike replied smugly, while the girls were impatient. It was a pre-fight demonstration that made the event more exciting.

Mike held out his hand to introduce his male classmates and spoke like a leading actor on stage.

“I spent a lot of time training with them to beat you, ... But because of that, my mind is very

clear now. I can see everything now ... ... Even the ending of this matchup."

"What did you say?"

"For me, a handicap of two pieces of clothing is no problem at all. Now, let's start the game. Let's burn your beautiful figure into our brains!"

"Damn it, ..., you weirdos!"

"You're getting excited. We're about to start, okay? The first one to get all their clothes off or give in loses. Okay?"

At the sound of Miron's voice, Mike and the girl nodded in agreement and placed their hands on the three switches in front of them. Their hands were hidden, so there was no room for cheating or manipulation, and no one could predict the outcome of the game.

The atmosphere in the hall changed slightly, and the war finally resumed!

"So... let the games begin!"

With Miron's signal, the familiar music of Baseball Fist begins to play loudly.

Miron was in the groove.

* * * * *

"Out! Safe! Good luck!"

With a shout, they both hit the switch at the same time.

"Huh ... ... huh huh huh ... ... huh huh huh huh huh huh huh!"

The hall that was filled with such laughter from Mike was now abuzz with the boys' fierce cheering.

"Behold, gentlemen! This is what I can really do now that I've acquired the power of truth!"

"Whoa, whoa, whoa! He's amazing!"

"I thought he'd lose in an instant! That's not the Mike I know!"

"That's what I'm talking about! All that training paid off!

"Mike, Mike, Mike, Mike! The boys were cheering even more enthusiastically, because Mike had won three battles in a row, and the other girl was already in her underwear. Mike also won the fourth round, which had just ended. Shou, Dird and the others were astonished and speechless at this.

"Hmph ... ..., come on, take it off!" Mike waved his hands in the air, and the girls growled in

frustration.

“Uhhhh ... ...!”

“Hahaha ... ... you can't give me that look ... ...! This is a legitimate competition! We're fighting fair and square according to the rules ... ... Huh!”

“Well, that's true, but ... ...”

“Come on! Quickly! Quickly take off that underwear ... ... guffaw, take it off!”

Mike's eyes flashed with excitement, and the girls looked at him with such disgust that they said, “You're disgusting! Fuck you!” “Fuck you!” “Fuck you! “Run!” The boys were screaming, “Good job, Mike!” and “Hurry up and take it off! Shou also shouted, “It's too much ... ...”

“If you can't take it off any more, you can give up. What do you say?”

Miron offered a helping hand, but the girl shook her head violently. But she was having a hard time taking off her underwear, and apparently, she was quite conflicted.

Seeing her like this, Mike walked up to the girl with his hands waving in the air. The disgusting look in his eyes was that of a criminal.

“Heee! Hey, hey, hey! What the hell Mike!”

“Guffaw ... ... If you can't take it off, I'll help you. Then I'll help you!”

“Huh? No, I don't want that! No, don't come here!”

“Guffaw, guffaw, guffaw!” But Mike didn't hear her and closed the distance between them with bloodshot eyes. At the sight of him, the female students who were watching the game said, “Oh no! Please run!” They screamed.

“Come on, ..., surrender yourself to me, ahhhhh!” Finally, Mike leapt at the schoolgirl, but...

“No, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no!”

“Bugger!” Mike was hit by a beautiful straight right hand from a female student, which caused him to black out.

The hall went silent in an instant. Then Miron, the MC, ran up to Mike and started counting.

“One! Two! Three!”

And after counting to ten, Miron told Mike that he could not continue fighting.

The crowd erupted into a loud “What? The boys, who had been cheering for Mike, said, “You've got to be kidding! We were so close! You stupid bastard! Get the hell out of here! What's the point of training? We were fools to expect anything from you!” They dragged the unconscious

Mike off the stage and kicked him around.

“Haha! Mike you idiot!”

“Pfft. That guy never disappoints, does he?”

“... ... Huh. That's refreshing.”

“But, but he was definitely strong at rock-paper-scissors ... ...Mike, I wonder what kind of training he's had ... ...”

Dird and the others laughed happily. Shou was also curious as to what he had trained in.

Then thinking that the first round was over, Miron continued, “Just so you know! If you can't continue fighting, you're allowed to switch to a reserve player!”

“A reserve player?”

Shou didn't know that such a thing existed, and when everyone else was equally surprised, Miron pointed her finger at someone.

“So, Karutia is the one registered as a reserve player.”

“... ...? Wow, it's me? Karutia was stunned by the sudden appointment, pointing at herself. But...

“Whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa! Good, good, good!”

“Karutia~! Avenge Mike, please!”

“Karutia, Karutia, Karutia, Karutia!”

“What, what, what, what, ～～～～?”

Karutia was bewildered by the intense excitement of the boys; as an introvert, she was not the kind of person who could escape such a forceful push. Perhaps it was because of such an easily influenced personality, but Karutia couldn't run away anymore and stood up from the referee's seat with trepidation and came to the place where the game was played - in front of the rock-paper-scissors switchboard.

“Hey, are you sure you want me to fight ... ...?”

“You can refuse, but at that point, your guild will be eliminated. Are you okay with that?”

“No, no, no!” For Karutia, it was the ultimate choice. She didn't want to get naked or lose her guild.

“Karutiaa! Karutiaa! Karutiaa! Karutia!”

Everyone's Karutia calls became more passionate. The guild mates are trying to avoid being

eliminated, and the boys were more interested in seeing Karutia naked than Mike or anyone else.

“... ... giggle.”

Under these circumstances, there was no way the timid Karutia could refuse. Thus, the game was handed over from Mike to Karutia and resumed.

“Hohoho! We had a little trouble, but whatever! Let's continue the first game!”

“Ooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooo!”

Even the moderator, Miron, got into the game, and Karutia couldn't run away anymore.” Um, um!” But her whisper was drowned out by the cheers of the audience.

“Karutia ... ... I'm sorry! I'm sorry, but I can't go easy on you!”

“No, no, no!”

The other ponytailed girl said, pushing Karutia further into a corner. And then, unceremoniously, the game began.

“Come on, come on, keep taking it off! Ta-da!”

“Uuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuu ... ...!”

And so, they found themselves on a three-game losing streak; Karutia had also been reduced to her underwear, both top and bottom, and since Mike's earlier victory had been nullified, the game was now 50-50.

“Karutia-san ... ..., I wonder if she's okay.”

“She looks so embarrassed~”

“Oh no, that's too hard for her.”

“Poor ... ...”

“She's an idol, so I thought she'd be used to being watched ... ...”

Shou and the others looked at the unhappy idol with concern. Even her opponent, a female student, said, “I'm sorry, Karutia! I'm so sorry!”

Such a situation...

“... ...ffff.”

Mike, who had been rolled into the corner of the hall by the boys, was staring with eyes firmly fixed on them.

“No one is going to think that this guy is pretending to be unconscious ... ...”

Yes, Mike had indeed fainted at one point when the schoolgirl had hit him, but he had quickly recovered. However, when he saw that Karutia had been sent out to take his place, he chose to stay unconscious and watch the game. This was, of course, because he wanted to see Karutia's naked body.

“It's amazing ... ... It's amazing Karutia ... ... It's beautiful ... ...!”

Karutia was one of Mike's dream women. That's why Mike was so impressed with Karutia's appearance on stage.

“Uke kekekekekeke.”

But he was so happy that he let out an unintentional, eerie laugh. The girls noticed this and quietly moved their positions to block Mike's view.

“Oh shoot, ...! I can't see her when I'm lying down ... ...!”

But if he woke up, he'd be caught pretending to be unconscious. Then there would be no more need for Karutia to compete as a substitute. He had to avoid that. But...

“Wow, ... you have beautiful skin ... ... I'm so jealous.”

“Really. You're an idol, aren't you? Amazing proportions.”

Mike was at the end of his patience when the girls in front of him started to talk about it.

“... ... oooohhhhhhhh! Let me see it, too!” And then Mike impulsively got up, and at that moment, all eyes were on him.

“Hmm? Oh, Mike, you're awake? That's enough of Karutia. Come on, Mike, get your ass back here. Karutia has already lost three times, so you'll have to start naked, and you can only play one more time under the special rules.”

“Ha! Oh, no!”

Miron's words made Mike realize the folly of what he had done, and the boys said, “Hey, don't be silly!” What a time to wake up! “Go back to sleep, you idiot! Mike got a lot of flak from the boys. On the other hand, only Karutia seemed to be relieved and patted her chest.

“Ku ... ... this, I'll just have to pass out again! Hahaha! You guys out there! Please! Hit me as hard as you can! Muhaha! Muhahahahahahaha!”

Mike shouted as he attacked the girl, but even though she was a girl, she was a pirate. He was not in the same situation as his previous opponent. He was punched in the stomach to keep him from fainting and was easily thrown up onto the stage.

“Mike! Mike! Mike! Mike!”

On the contrary, this time the girls called out Mike. Of course, the boys, who didn't want to see a man naked, booed loudly.

“Come on, come on, everyone is waiting for you. Let's get you out of here!”

Miron seemed to be getting into the swing of things as well, although Mike's face was still red from being wrapped up in the mattress ... ...

“I give up...” He simply quit.

“You bastard! This is the end of the first match!” Miron quickly kicked Mike off the stage and announced the second match.

“You slacker!” “You were ready for this!” “What happened to overcoming hardship!” “You liar, I'll have you thrown overboard!”

“Wait, wait, wait, wait, wait! Guhaaaa?”

Mike was finally taken aback by the boys, who booed him loudly and took him away from the room.

“... ... Is this really going to be over by the end of the day ... ...?”

Shou, who had witnessed the whole thing, mumbled with a strange feeling of exhaustion.

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It was a terrible first game, but the rest of the day went rather smoothly, with Miron leading the way in a series of heated matches.

Alea, Palty, and Apuesta managed to get through the first game without getting to their underwear. Most of the boys were defeated, probably due to their handicaps. Each time, the boys sighed loudly and lost their morale, but the girls got excited and some of them shouted when the boys took off their underwear.

Many times along the way, there were shouts of “Let me see the game, too!” from the edge of the hall, but everyone ignored it.

And then the moment would come.

“Then it's time for the last round! Shou-kun! Dird, come up here!”

“Ha, yes!”

“Yes!”

Shou and Dird walked up to the stage together. Alea and the others came up behind them and said, “Good luck!” Both of them cheered firmly, “We're rooting for you!

In the center of the stage, Shou faced Dird.

Shou's heart was beating strongly, and it was transmitted to his hands as tension. It was only a game of rock-paper-scissors, but Shou was as nervous as he had been when he first fought with the Guardian.

Because no matter how ridiculous the game of Baseball Fist was, if he took off everything, he would lose. In this tournament system, losing meant losing the war. It didn't matter how many times he stripped down to his underwear, he couldn't afford to lose even once. Moreover, losing would be an abomination in such a public place. It was natural for him to feel nervous.

“Alright! I can't lose, Shou!”

“Me too ... ...!”

“Huh. You two have good eyes. Let's go then! Boom, boom, boom!”

The venue was buzzing with excitement.

Dird, standing in front of Shou, was blushing and covering her breasts with her hands.

“I'm sorry, Dird, but it's a serious game ... ...”

“Uh-huh. I know, Shou.”

Dird had taken off several items of clothing and was now in nothing but her underwear. The men in the audience were glued to her figure, and the girls were screaming, “Don't look at her!” Dird squirmed in embarrassment.

“Okay, okay, I'm going next! Ta-da!”

Beep! Shou and Dird pressed the switch at the same time. The results appeared on the monitor.

Shou's result was “rock”.

And Dird's result was... “Scissors”.

“Ooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooo!”

The venue was filled with exploding cheers, and Dird's defeat was finally decided.

However, she could still fight one more time as a special rule by taking off her last piece.

“I'm not going to lose this time!” Dird cheerfully took off her last piece of clothing.

“Da, Dird!” Shou blushed and averted his gaze but wondered at the boys' cheers turning to disappointment and the girls' sighs of relief and looked fearfully at Dird.

“... ... Ah.”

Dird's chest and crotch area were hidden by a pitch black secret wall.

“I would have preferred her in her underwear if that was the case!”

The boys cried out in distress, and Shou agreed with them, but was also relieved, because Dird's underwear had disrupted his concentration, and he had lost a rare one.

“Uuuuuu ... ... well, I lost ～～～～!” Dird sat down on the spot with a sigh of relief.

“Yes! So, the winner is Shou-kun!

The second round starts in fifteen minutes! You guys, make it even more exciting than it already is!”

“Whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa!”

Then the boys came up on stage in a row. Shou, who was suddenly surrounded by them, was naturally confused.

“What? What's going on?”

“Wow, Kukoma!”

“Congratulations, Shou!”

“You're a god!”

“You are our hope!

“What? What? Whoa!”

Without Mike and the other interpreters, Shou had no idea what they were saying. But he guessed that they were pleased. To prove it, they lifted Shou up and started to carry him around as if they had decided the winner.

“Wasshoi, wasshoi! Wasshoi, wasshoi!”

“Shou-kun. It seems like everyone is expecting Shou-kun.”

“Eeeeee! Hey, help!” While Ichiro looked on with a smile as Shou was lifted into the air several times.

It was time for a break before the second round started. Shou, finally free of the boys, trotted over to Alea and the others.

“Yo, good work.”

“Shou, congratulations.”

“Hey, where's Dird?” Shou wondered about Dird, who was not there.

“She must have been in shock after the loss. She's holed up in the waiting room.”

“But she'll come out as soon as she calms down. Please leave her alone for a while.” Palty gently stopped Shou as he was about to head for the waiting room.

“But ... ...”

Dird and the others were fighting on behalf of the guild, and unlike Shou, they had responsibilities of their own, he realized at this point.

“Hey, hey, Palty said it too. In a game, some people win, and some people lose. That's how we've always done it. No hard feelings between us, and I don't think Dird has anything against Shou.”

“Alea ... ...”

Alea patted him on the shoulder, and Apuesta and Palty followed suit.

“... ... Yeah. Besides, the war is over today.”

“I suppose so. Let's do everything we can to make sure we have no regrets.”

The three of them smiled and looked at Shou.

So Shou also smiled and replied. “──Yes!”

After the break, the second round began...!

Alea and Palty managed to win the second round as well. The boys were frustrated that they couldn't get the girls undressed.

Then it was Shou's turn.

“Yes! It's the last two rounds! Shou-kun! Apuesta, come on up!” Miron called, and with a loud cheer, Shou and Apuesta went on stage.

The two faced each other. Their appearance is also shown on the monitor.

Apuesta's mouth was tightly clenched, and she had her hands on her chest, clearly showing how nervous she was. Before going on stage, she handed Palty her soroban-shaped vocalizer and walked up to him as if she had made up her mind.

“Apuesta ... ...”

“.....” She swallowed hard and nodded, apparently ready to go.

Shou nodded back.

“You two are ready, right? Let's go, then. Jan-Ken...”

The audience groaned several times.

Because here, Shou did not take off a single piece of clothing and won straight away.

“Soo, wow ... ... that guy is the real deal!”

“Oh ... ... God, ...Kukoma God, ...!”

“What a dazzling guy ... ... I can't even see him properly ... ...”

The male classmates looked up at Shou with a twinkle in their all-too-pure eyes, and Shou felt uncomfortable at the strange sight; he hadn't seen that before. Shou felt uncomfortable at this strange scene and felt a little guilty because the cause of this admiration was the act of undressing Dird and the others.

(Oh, man, this was supposed to be a much cleaner game ... ...) While complaining in his mind to the organizer who decided to play Baseball Fist and to Miron who encouraged him to do so, Shou decided to apologize to Dird and the others as much as he could later.

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“Ugh ... ... I lost ... ...”

“Good work, Apuesta.” Palty took Apuesta to the changing room, where Dird and Alea had already changed and returned.

“Shou, you're really strong!”

Apuesta nodded her head.

“Shou's not really cheating, is he? He's too strong, no matter what.”

“I don't think so, Shou isn't that kind of person, and if he was, you guys, the judges, would have found out.”

“Oh, I see that too. Tsk.”

Palty returned Alea's complaint, and Alea's lips twitched in agreement.

“But if we don't, we might be in trouble, too. You better prepare yourself to get into your underwear, Palty... Oh, well, Palty doesn't seem to mind being seen by Shou, so it's not a problem.”

“Aha! What do you mean, what do you mean, what do you mean?” Palty's face turned red as she yelled at her, and Alea couldn't help but cover her ears.

“But, before Palty and Shou, it's Alea's turn, okay? Are you okay~?”

“... ... be careful.”

“Yeah, well, I'll try my best.”

“Not at all ... ... Please be careful.”

And so, the semi-finals finally begin.

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The prospective winner of the first trial.

The matchup card is Alea VS Ichiro.

“Heh, ...Alea and Ichiro-kun, huh?”

“Good luck Alea, ～～～～!”

“... ... I'm getting nervous too.”

“Yes, I am ... ... Me too ... ...”

Shou and the girls, along with the rest of the audience, went into a cheering position.

On the stage, they faced each other and started talking.

“I didn't expect you to come up. I'm a little surprised.”

“I didn't think I'd be facing Alea like this either.”

The two of them were shown on the monitor, their conversation reaching the entire hall via the speakers.

“All right, then, let's get on with it. I can't afford to lose at this point.”

“I see. Hey, Alea.”

“Hmm? What?”

“I give up. I give up.”

“!”

Ichiro's statement startled not only Alea, but the entire audience as well.

“Hey ... ..., what the hell are you talking about?”

“That's exactly what I said. It's just a coincidence that I made it this far, and I don't want Alea to beat me to a pulp. So, I give up, Miron Sensei.”

“What? Oh, wait a minute! It's true that you can give up, but ... ... this is boring! There are girls waiting to see you naked!”

Miron tried to stop him, and some of the girls shouted in disappointment, but Ichiro said, “I'm sorry,” and walked off the stage.

“Alright, I get it! So, Alea wins by default! Then let's go to the next match!”

“Well, you're lucky you won without any trouble.”

Alea walked off the stage with an angry Miron in her face.

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“Kuku ... ... fuhahahahaha! Just like we planned, Ichiro!”

“Just like the plan? ... ... You just surrendered, didn't you?”

The corridor in the facility after leaving the grand banquet hall. In front of Ichiro, who was sighing, Mike, still wearing a mattress and his face swollen to a pulp, was grinning in a good mood. It was no wonder. It's because his plan was a success.

“Ichiro ... ..., I'm terrified of myself ... ... There is no gap in my perfect strategy ... ...”

“You just threw the whole operation to ... ...Shou-kun, didn't you?”

“No, I left it to him. I don't think we'll be able to beat Shou. He's the real deal, having beaten the queen of rock-paper-scissors, Tomi. We know that from the straight wins he's had so far. Then Ichiro doesn't need to beat Alea. So, I thought to myself, “If ... ...Shou can beat Palty after this, then we can see Alea naked without any hassle after Dird, Apuesta, Karutia, and Palty! Hmph! Muhahahahaha! It's not just Shou! I'm a genius, too!”

“What a terrible plan ... ... Well, there's a secret wall, so technically you can't see them naked.” Ichiro had his head in his hands. He had his own reasons for going along with such a plan, though.

After all, Alea was the representative of Balta. Of course, the Balta guild to which Alea belonged was a sideline, an organization that has been cut off from the original Balta. However, since the head family Balta currently existed as an independent country, even though it is a sideline that has been cut off, it is possible that Shou will give up the victory there, and there is a possibility that it will be profitable.

“Well ... well, I wouldn't be able to beat Shou-kun even if I went to the final, and I didn't want to lose and get naked on the final stage, so I should say that.”

“I guess so. After all, we're betting all our money on Shou. If Shou continues to win, ... our status will improve rapidly!”

Mike's face tightened up. That's right, Mike and his friends have been making bets with a lot of “people” behind the scenes, and they were betting all the money they had on Shou to represent Earth. In other words, even if they don't win, if Shou won, they will make a huge profit and even get to see their classmates in all their glory. In a way, it was a perfect victory.

“Huh ... ..., please Shou, my soulmate!”

“Haha ... ...Shou-kun wouldn't think that we're doing this behind his back, would he?”

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The next game was the second semifinal match.

The matchup card was Palty VS. Shou.

“Shou-kun! Palty, you guys! Next time, don't give in or anything! You'll ruin the game! Got it?”

“Yes, yes!”

“I don't want to do it either, but ... ...”

“All right then! I'll be right back!”

Shou and Palty walked onto the stage, disgusted by Miron's careless hosting.

“Palty ... ...”

“Shou, we've both made it this far, haven't we?”

“Yeah ... ..., I guess so.”

“Shou is kind, so you care about Dird and Apuesta. However, such concern is unnecessary. Although the form is different, this is no different from a war using Guardians. As a representative of the guild, I must fight without shame. So Shou, there is no need to hold back. Please give it your all.”

“Palty ... ...”

Her expression was stern - but she had very clear eyes.

(She was very strong. She has that look in her eyes after taking on everything - herself, her home, her family, even her guild. So, I have to respond to her) Shou thought, nodding. “... ...Yes! Okay, okay! Let's do it with all our might!”

“Yes!”

The two smiled at each other.

The audience applauded and the taiko drum goes “boom! The drums thumped loudly.

“Then it's time to start! Let's get them off!”

At the sound of Miron's voice, Shou and Palty looked at each other and placed their hands on the switches at hand.

“Jan-Ken!”

The result of that match was ... ... What a surprise, Shou won in eight straight games.

“Oh, no, that's not possible ... ...?” Palty, who was still hiding her chest, collapsed on the spot with a heave.

“Yes! Winner Shou-kun! You're in the finals, Kettei!”

“Waaaa

In this place, surrounded by many machines, the men spoke with narrowed eyes.

“You want to determine the winner this way? To hell with you, ...!”

“Yeah, totally.”

“It's like it's just a festival.”

“It looks like they're just playing.”

As if in sympathy with the man who slammed the desk, the other men also had stern looks on their faces. The atmosphere they give off is not that of ordinary people, but clearly that of trained elites.

In the midst of all this, someone with a distinctly different mood from the other men - a man with his hair pulled back - spoke up.

“Hmph. Leave them alone for now. What they're doing is just for fun. When all is said and done, we'll show them what we can do.”

The angry men's mouths twisted into grins at his words.

“You're right.”

“Right. Although now is not the time for that yet.”

“When all is said and done, we'll take care of the problem here.”

“Ah. By that time, we won't need them anymore.”

The men stared at the image with suspicious smiles on their faces.

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“Hai, hai! The last final is about to begin! Let's all gather up!” Miron's voice echoed throughout the venue, and all the people who had been spending their break time buying food from the stalls or sitting on the benches gathered in the center of the venue - turned towards the stage.

Of course, Shou and his friends were among them.

“Uu ... ..., it's finally here!”

“Shou, good luck! And Alea, of course!”

“What, you think I'm going to lose to Shou?”

“I hope you two have a good ... ... match.”

“We'll be rooting for you, too.”

Dird and the others laughed at him, and Shou was so happy that he quickly replied.

“Guys ... ... yeah, thanks! Alea, let's do this fair and square!”

“Of course. We've come this far, I'm going to win!”

Alea and Shou laughed together, and they were ready to go.

“It's taken a while, but now the war on this island is finally over! So, the final match! Shou-kun! Alea, get up here!”

“Yes!”

“Aye!”

When their names were called, a wave of cheers spread out from the hall, “Waaaaaah!

Shou and Alea walked onto the stage and faced each other in front of the judges.

“Miah!”

“Huh...good luck to both Shou-kun and Alea.”

“Ugh. Fah, it's a fight!”

“Hohoho. They've both grown up, haven't they? Hey, Tomi.”

“Yeah, Shou-chan, Alea-chan, do it so you won't have any regrets.”

M from the Cabbits, Loretta, Karutia who had changed her clothes, Dird's grandfather, Tomi.

Everyone who had gone through the battle with them was watching over Shou and the others in their own way.

Shou nodded his head yes, Alea was a little embarrassed, but Shou knew she would be happy to hear the cheers.

“Hai! You two, in the middle!” Miron instructed, and the two of them stepped out gently.

They each looked at the other across the rock-paper-scissors table with the switch.

Shou looked at Alea, her face full of confidence.

She smiled happily and said, “When I first met you, you didn't look like the kind of guy who could live in a tent there, but Shou, you've changed a lot.”

“What? Oh, really?”

“Well, I guess I've become a little more fearless. You can't beat Dird with a harpoon, you can't

even cook properly, Miron is playing with you, you don't know how to use the Guardian, and you're still pathetic as ever.

“I'll be honest with you, Alea. I'm not going to lose. I'm here to beat you and end this war.”

“Well, you've come to say that, haven't you?”

The audience that had been listening to their conversation was getting excited, and seeing Alea's smile as she confronted him, Shou felt that he was being recognized.

She was right, coming to this island and suddenly being forced to live a life of survival. At first, he was so confused that he couldn't do anything and wanted to run away as soon as possible, but now he really liked this island. He really enjoyed his life with the girls.

That's why he wanted to end this war as soon as possible. He now understood how important this war was to them. But he didn't want to see them killing each other.

On this island. They are always happy and laughing. The way they live their lives, always laughing and enjoying themselves, is what he believed to be the real them. In order to protect them, Shou strengthened his resolve even more.

“I will definitely win! Let's fight! Alea!”

“Come at me, Shou! I'll strip you naked as fast as I can!”

The two of them got into a mid-back position and put their hands on the switches.

The spirit of each other wrapped up the entire venue ── The voices of the audience stopped quickly.

Even MC Miron and the judges were almost bottled up in the atmosphere, and Miron panicked and grabbed the mic tightly.

“Yeah, let's go then! Are you ready?”

“Yes!”

“Ready when you are!”

“That's a good answer! Let's go for round one! Let's go! Out! Safe! Good, good, good!”

Their hands flicked a switch in their hands.

A tense first move.

Shou made paper.

And Alea made a rock.

“Waaaa

“No.”

“Oh, no!”

“No.”

“No.” All of them together denied that Shou was cheating.

“Oh, my God! I don't think Shou is cheating either! That's why I don't agree with you! Everyone knows that!

It was easy to understand if you put yourself in Alea's shoes.

It was a fair game of rock-paper-scissors with a hidden switch, but Shou had only lost once to Dird. And there was no cheating. Shou began to feel a little sorry for Alea, who probably didn't know how to fight against such an opponent.

“Hai, hai. I'll go to the final game as soon as I understand!”

“It hasn't been decided that it's the last one yet!”

“Don't say that until you win! Yes, sir! Get ready!”

At Miron's words, Shou and Alea put their hands to the switch.

“Let's go then! Jan-Ken!”

“Beep!

There was the sound of a switch being pressed. The result is displayed on the huge monitor in the center. The people fell silent.

Shou's move was scissors.

Alea's hand was paper.

All eyes were on Alea. She could have one more fight if she got naked by special exception. But Shou, who had won straight up to this point, would probably find it impossible to win it all.

Alea shook her head quietly. At that moment, Miron took a deep breath towards Mike.

“──Finals are over! And the war is over! The winner is... Kukoma Shou-kun!

The word “Congratulations” appeared in large letters on the monitor. The venue shook with the loudest cheer of the day!

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Finally, the war was over, the venue was filled with Shou calls, and everyone came up to the

stage to praise Shou's victory...

"... ... is over, isn't it ... ...?" In the corner of the stage, Miron muttered to herself. She had been a lively emcee until a few minutes ago, but now she was looking at Shou in the center of the stage with a very sad and weak expression, as if she was about to cry. "... ...Now, I'm ... ..." She mumbled something that no one could hear. Miron left the venue unnoticed.

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"Oh no, I lost, I lost." The changing room after the game. There, Alea whined and changed, while Dird, Apuesta, and Palty were around her.

"That's too bad~, Alea."

"Damn right, I am. I'm sorry you had to go through that. I can't do this anymore!"

"It's the same for ... ... us."

"Hmm. But when you think about it, we were all taken off by Shou, weren't we?"

At Palty's words, Dird and the others froze. Apuesta was the first to turn red and shrink, Dird also looked embarrassed, and even Alea was wriggling her mouth, as if remembering what she had just said. Palty, who had just said it, blushed after a small "Oh ... ..."

"But, but now our battle is over, isn't it?" Then Dird changed the subject.

"... ... Yeah, I guess so. It ended in a very different way from the beginning, didn't it?"

"... ...Yes. I didn't expect it to be settled by rock-paper-scissors."

"I never dreamed of that, did you?"

"Yeah, yeah! You've changed so much since Shou came!" Alea and the others nodded loudly at Dird's words.

"In the first place, it's impossible for us pirates who belong to different guilds to be doing something like this on Earth."

"... ... Before I knew it, I was too used to living on Banjō Island."

"It's true. And ... ... phew. Even though it's a battle to decide our future, I kind of enjoyed it a lot. I wonder if that's all because of Shou's influence."

"Well, if it weren't for Shou, none of this would have happened."

"... ... Yeah."

"Yeah, I know!"

It was kind of oddly funny. Even though they had lost the battle, the four of them couldn't help but laugh at each other. The girls had noticed that they had changed a bit. It wasn't that they had forgotten their original goal. It's not that they thought it was okay to lose.

But. The girls - they really liked living on Banjō Island, on this planet. That's why they could smile even now. Each of them had her own big problems, but they were still able to laugh at each other.

Then Alea, who had finished changing her clothes, said, “Well, well. Then, shall we go see Shou's sunny appearance?”

“... ... Yeah. Awards ceremony coming up.”

“Yes, I guess so. Shall we go?”

“Yes! Let's go!” The four of them left the changing room without further ado.

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“So, we will now begin the award ceremony for the winner - Kukoma Shou-kun.” Minamida said with a mic in his hand. “Come on, Kukoma, this way.”

“Yes, yes!”

Amidst loud applause and cheers, Shou nervously made his way to the center of the stage. The audience laughed as Shou was so tense that his hands and feet were sticking out at the same time. Even the judges were giggling.

When they reached the center, Minamida said with a smile, “Congratulations on your win. I was ... ... surprised that you actually won.”

“Oh, thank you so much!”

“Yeah. So, well, even though it's an award ceremony, it's not like I can award you any particular certificates or trophies, but ... ... it's just a formality. Besides, I have to show everyone that you're looking good.”

The audience erupted in applause, even louder than before.

“Our God~!”

“I've changed my mind about you, Kukoma Shou~!”

“We're so proud of you!”

“Congratulations, Kukoma!

“That was amazing!”

The cheers of his immediate classmates, both male and female, sounded loud, but other voices from the adults kept arriving as well, Shou's chest quivering with joy.

“Oh, thank you so much!” He bowed his head in a big way towards everyone. Then the loud cheers spread again.

“Congratulations indeed. Now, then, about the next reward for winning...”

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Shou's award ceremony went off without a hitch, and the excitement did not stop until the end. Immediately afterwards, the artisans, vendors, and everyone else started to clear out the venue.

Shou, who had been showered with gifts from many people, including bouquets of flowers and leftover food, was holding a pile of them and looking for someone.

“Hmmm, I don't see ... ..., Miron Sensei.”

It was Miron. She was the host of the event, but for some reason, she hadn't been at the award ceremony and had disappeared. He looked around but could not find her. She stood out in many ways, so usually it was easy to recognize her.

“──Ah, Minamida-san!” Shou then spotted Minamida holding an incubator. He ran over to them.

“Hi, Kukoma-kun. Thanks for all your hard work today. I guess you can't take care of these kids yet with that luggage.”

“Thanks for your hard work too, Minamida-san. Oh, I'm sorry! I'll come back later to pick them up!”

“Yeah, okay. More importantly, ..., I didn't think you'd actually win the rock-paper-scissors competition. As I said before, I'm still very surprised by this.”

“Oh no. I just happened to be lucky.”

“But you were confident in your rock-paper-scissors game, weren't you? That's why you chose to play that game.”

“... ... Yes.” Shou said, lightly reminiscing about the old days. “I ... ... thought that I didn't have any advantages. But in the midst of being with Minamida-san and Dird and the others, I ... ... realized it. I've always been good at rock-paper-scissors, and I've never lost ... ... So, I thought if I could incorporate that into the war, even I could win.”

“... ... I see. And as it turns out, that's how you won. It's a great talent. That's something you should be proud of.”

“Thank you. But I don't even feel it at all yet ... ... I heard about the reward for winning earlier,

but the idea of going to space doesn't feel real at all."

"Haha. Well, I guess so. It was the same with me."

"You too, Minamida-san?"

"Yes. You're like me... no, you're a lot like me."

"Huh?"

"That's why, I guess. It made me want to cheer for you, and I thought that you might actually win the championship. You remind me a lot of myself when I was a kid."

"Minamida-san: ... ..."

Minamida looked at the night sky. Then - Minamida took off his sunglasses and looked at Shou. At that moment, Shou saws Minamida's true face for the first time.

"Congratulations again, Kukoma Shou-kun. I know you have a lot of hard work ahead of you, but I, for one, welcome you to space." Minamida smiled innocently, as if he were a child. His hand was gently held out towards Shou.

"Thank you, Minamida-san ... ...!" Shou managed to grab the hand with one hand while carrying a lot of luggage. And the way they laughed at each other, they looked like two old friends.

"Having said that, I'm sure Kukoma-kun hasn't decided what he's going to do yet. There's no need to panic just yet, so please take your time to think about and decide what you want to do."

"Yes, I understand."

They let go of each other's hands.

Then Shou remembered, "Oh. Yes, Minamida-san, do you know where Miron Sensei went?"

"Hmm ... ... Miss Miron or ... ...?" He asked, and for some reason Minamida's expression suddenly clouded over.

"... ...Minamida-san?"

"Oh no, sorry. If you're looking for Miss Miron, I think she's back in the cruiser."

"What? She's already back? She was so excited to be a moderator."

"Yeah. You should go."

"Yes, I understand." He was worried that Minamida was acting a little strange, but he also wanted to thank Miron for supporting him.

Therefore, Shou left the venue ahead of the others and headed for Miron's cruiser house.

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“... ... Ah.” After Shou's back was turned, Minamida realized something and said, “Oh, ..., I forgot to give this to Kukoma-kun.” Minamida then looked at the silver “key” that he had taken out of his pocket. “ ... ... Well, I guess I should leave you two alone for a bit now.” Minamida put the key in his pocket and gave a small laugh.

Seeing this, Cabbit - M, who was at his feet, said happily. “You are so meddlesome, you know what Shou-kun will do, don't you?”

“Well, yeah.”

“Huh. If it works out, you'll be able to keep seeing her from now on.”

“If it does, I guess that's called karma. Anyway, we'll just have to wait and see for now.”

“Piyo, Piyo!”

M climbed onto Minamida's shoulders, smiling as she stared at Pī and Piyo's incubator, and then they both looked with kind eyes in the direction Shou had left them.

“Oi! Minamida-san!”

“Hmm? Oh, it's you guys.”

At that moment, Dird, Alea, Apuesta, Palty, and Karutia appeared together.

“Thanks to you all for your hard work today. I'm sorry I made you feel so embarrassed.”

“It's true~! I don't play games like that anymore!”

“Well, Shou was too good, wasn't he?”

“... ... I might want to end this kind of thing for good.”

“It's true. It was quite embarrassing just to be seen by everyone on this island.”

“Yes, ..., I shudder to think what would have happened if it had been broadcast live.” Karutia said, and the Dird all nodded loudly, “Mm-hmm.”

“Haha. So, what's the matter? What do you want from me?” Minamida asked, and the girls realized this with an “aha” moment.

“Yes, that's right. We wanted to ask you something.” Palty said on behalf of the girls.

“What is it?” Minamida made himself ready to listen.

“Well, during the fight earlier, there were some strange numbers appearing in the lower right corner of the monitor ... ...”

“Yeah, I'm pretty sure I saw something like that. I thought Miss Miron was counting something, but I don't know what the ... ... hell it was. Actually, I wasn't told about it either.”

“Is that so? So, the number went up rapidly in the middle of the day ... ... We were talking about what it was, but ... ... we couldn't get an answer in the end, so we came here to ask Minamida-san.”

“I see. Yeah, I get it. I'm curious too, so I'll ask her.” With that, Minamida took out a small communication terminal and started to communicate somewhere.

“Oh, this is Minamida. Um, I'd like to ask you a few questions, actually ... ... yes ... ...Yes ... ... Huh?” There, suddenly Minamida's complexion went surreally blue, and Dird and the others looked at each other and nodded their heads.

After the communication was over, Minamida put away the terminal, looking very depressed and sullen for some reason. M, on the other hand, was giggling on Minamida's shoulder.

“Minamida-san~?”

“What's wrong with you?”

“You look ... ... pale ... ...”

“Minamida-san? Is there something wrong?”

“No, ... actually ... ... it’s ... ...” Minamida slurred his words as if he was having a very hard time speaking, and eventually, he spoke as if he had given up.

“Um, ... please don't get mad at me, but ... ... actually, that number was ... ...”

They listened to the rest of it. Dird and the others screamed so loudly that it echoed throughout the island.

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“I'm sorry to bother you ... ... Ah, there you are.” Shou arrived at Miron's cruiser house and went inside to the room that was being used as a living room, where he saw Miron sitting alone in a chair.

“Excuse me, Miron-sensei...” As he tried to speak to her there, Shou stopped mid-sentence.

That was because Miron's profile was so sad that he had never seen it before, and it almost made his chest tighten.

Miron must have recognized him by his voice and presence, because she looked at Shou and murmured, “──Hara, isn't it Shou-kun? Congratulations on your victory. Kanpa~i in celebration of the victor!”

“Oh, thank you very much. Are you drinking that much alcohol again?”

“It's fine. ～～～～. Now I'm relieved of my burden...” Miron raised her arms in the air and stretched, her face showing none of the sadness she had shown earlier. She must be very drunk. She looked a little wobbly.

When Shou put a large amount of food and other stuff on a nearby table, Miron took a bite of it with a “Whoa. “There's some good snacks here. I think I'll have another drink then.”

Miron took out a new bottle of sake from the cupboard, and Shou began to speak, “Um, Miron Sensei, there's something I need to talk to you about...”

“Oh, stop, stop. I'm sorry, but as soon as the battle is over, I'm no longer in charge. What happens next is none of my business. So, if you want to talk to me about ... ..., you should talk to Minamida.” Miron opened a bottle of sake and started drinking it straight from the bottle.

“Miron Sensei ... ...?”

Miron was the kind of person who would get involved with people at will, whether they wanted to be involved or not. This time, however, something was different. The arrogant and uninhibited Miron seemed to be on the verge of disappearing.

“... ...Miron Sensei, what's wrong?”

But Miron made no reply. In fact, she didn't even try to make eye contact with Shou.

“Something's wrong, you know? Normally, I'd say let's get everyone involved - let's have a launch party or something - and make a fool of ourselves, but ... ... I can't believe I'm drinking alone in a place like this ... ... Sharap! Shut up! I told you I don't care anymore!!!”

Miron raised her voice, and Shou shrugged in surprise at the power of it. Their eyes met. There was a heavy silence between them...

Then Miron turned around, placed the bottle on the table, and said, ... I'm sorry. This is what I call taking it out on you ... ... This is why Minamida knows that I am inexperienced.”

“... ...What? What the hell are you talking about ... ...?”

“What? Of course, I'm a virgin.”

“Huh?” Shou froze with his mouth wide open, while Miron continued to mock herself.

“It's funny, isn't it? I can't believe I'm this old and this inexperienced in sex.”

“Yeah, well, ... if you suddenly come out with such a painful face, ...”

“But it can't be helped! When I was in college, I was still a child compared to the people around me ... ... When I finally hit puberty, I was surrounded by old men at work! It's not my fault. It's not my fault, you know!” Miron looked very serious as she shouted, and Shou could see that her eyes were moist.

So Shou was confused and didn't know how to treat Miron.

“I'm not good at love anyway! I can study, but I don't know anything about love! I don't know how to play games! That's why I wanted Minamida to attack me and take the blame!”

“Wow, that's nasty ... ...”

“Huh! I'm such a bitch! ... ... Minamida wouldn't attack me anyway, and it's all over now. I've waiting to have my memory wiped ... ...”

“What?”

Miron just mumbled a very curious word. “My memory will be erased.”

Shou asks quickly, “Wait a minute, Sensei, you just said that your memory will be erased ... ...”

Miron responded, pausing for a beat before speaking weakly. “... ... That's right. Now that the war is over, and I've done my part as an Earthling, my memories of this island will soon be erased. But it can't be helped. That's what I was promised.”

“Oh no, ...!” He'd never heard of that. He'd never heard of such a thing before. But now he knew. This was the reason why Miron was as desperate as she had been earlier.

To Shou's surprise, Miron apologized while keeping her face down. “... ... I'm sorry Shou-kun. I've put you through a lot, haven't I?”

“Eh ... ..., no way. I don't mind that kind of thing!”

“I knew you'd say that, Shou-kun, you're always looking out for me ... ..., and that's why you're taking advantage of me. Because it's so kind, I ... Uh, uh, higu ...” Miron, who was still groggy - then, to his surprise, she started crying, stifling her voice.

“Eh, eh, eh?”

Was it because of the alcohol? Shou couldn't do anything to stop the adult woman from crying. The only thing he could do was stare at Miron in a daze, and then she grabbed the hem of Shou's shirt, squeezing it tightly, and mumbled, “... ... I don't want to leave you, oh ... ... We'll always be together ... ...”

Miron's shoulders quivered slightly. Miron, who had been pompous and jovial beyond her stature, was now as unreliable as a young child.

(It's kind of ... ... cute.)

The current Miron looks like a kitten abandoned in a cardboard box.

(I'm not sure if I should pick it up or leave it alone ... ...) Shou hesitated for a moment, but then decided to answer, “... ... Well, as Sensei knows, I won the competition, so I get to go to space ... ...”

“I know ... ...” Miron said a bit bluntly, keeping her face down.

“But I'm still a minor, so I'm allowed to be chaperoned by a guardian. But my mom and dad are kind of mentally weak ... ... They said they wanted to come to this island, but they still can't seem to leave the mainland ... ...”

“... ...I know.”

“How do I convince my parents to go to space? ... ... I think it's impossible. Because it's space, right?”

“... ...Yeah.”

“So, Minamida-san told me that instead of my immediate family, I can take someone I trust as my guardian, as long as it's just one person.”

“... ... ...”

He noticed that Miron looked up a little and was looking at Shou with a jittery look on her face. It was just like a kitten with its face half out of the cardboard. Shou averted his gaze so as not to be noticed, feeling a little funny at the all-too-honest look in his eyes.

“So, there's only one person around me who's tough, energetic, and unusual enough to endure going into space, and who's willing to accept the incredible story of going into space right away. Well, you know, whether she's a trustworthy person or not.”

“... ... Shou-kun?”

“Well, it's ... ..., so...”

Miron's too honest and sincere eyes stared at him, and Shou became a little embarrassed.

“That ... ... Miron Sensei, if you don't mind, would you like to come with me and follow me into space?”

At that statement Miron looked stunned, like she was looking at something she couldn't believe, “... ... Me, and?”

“Yes. I mean, I'm too nervous to go into space alone, too, and I was thinking that ... ... Miron Sensei would be a great help.”

“Shou-kun ... ..., but that's so sudden.” Miron's cheeks flushed red for some reason, and then she looked uncomfortable, her gaze wandering around the area.

“What? Sensei wanted to go to space, too, didn't she? That's why I thought it would be just right to go to ... ... ― Ah! See, and if you're with me, it won't be the end of your relationship with me, and you won't have to have your memory erased, right?”

“!” Miron's eyes widened in astonishment; Shou's idea seemed to be correct. But she quickly

averted her gaze again, her cheeks flushing. “But, but ... ..., I can't believe you're proposing to me out of the blue ... ..., even I'm a little unprepared for that ... ...”

“What?”

“Besides, Shou-kun is not old enough to get married yet, right? So, this kind of thing should be done slowly after Shou-kun comes of age ... ...”

“E ... ..., stop, stop! I'm just asking you to follow me!” Shou panicked, but Miron didn't stop.

“But of course, it's not that I don't want to, okay? If I could, I'd give you an answer right away, but right now you're still a student and I'm still the Sensei of the ... ... school. It's not too late, at least not until after Shou-kun graduates...”

“Hey, hey, hey! Listen to what people are saying!”

“You can't be violent all of a sudden, Shou-kun ... ..., but I'm a little nervous.”

“So, what the hell are you talking about?

Just when Shou was confused as to how to stop Miron from going out of control...

“Shou～～～～～～～～～～～～～!!!”

“Whoa!” What?”

With a loud bang, the door to the room slammed open with tremendous force, and a number of girls entered the room with loud footsteps.

“E ... ..., everyone?” Shou's eyes lit up, and there were five of them - Dird, Alea, Apuesta, Palty, and Karutia.

For some reason, they were all looking very red, and the corners of their eyebrows were raised. It was obvious that they were angry.

“What, what? What's wrong with you?”

“It's not what's wrong, ～～～～!”

“Hey, Shou, what have you done to me?

“... ...Shou!”

“This can't be happening!

“I'm so embarrassed!”

They all came at him at once, and Shou was quickly cornered against the wall. Unsure of what was going on, Shou tried to figure out why they were so angry, but he couldn't come up with an

answer.

Then Miron, who had been in a daze for a while, stood up and said, “Hey, wait a minute, you guys. What do you think you're doing, barging into my house out of nowhere and asking for my Shou-kun?”

“My Shou-kun?”

“Oh, shut up! Tell me what you're doing here!”

Dird shouted at the upset Miron, still in high spirits.

“It's not very nice, oh no ～～～～～～～～! Today's Baseball Fist Tournament was broadcast live to the entire galaxy. ～～～～～～～～～～!”

“Huh?” Shou and Miron shout at the same time.

“Dird's right, you're right! Today's match! The whole thing was broadcasted! Minamida just confirmed it for us, so we’re sure!”

“And ... ... in the whole galaxy ... ...”

“Haha ... ... me ... ... what kind of face am I going to have to live with from now on ... ...”

“Ughhhh. Wow, they've seen everything about us.”

Alea got excited, Apuesta mumbled weakly, Palty wobbled as if she was about to collapse, and Karutia half-cried as she said this.

“E ... ..., yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah!”

Shou shouted in surprise. “Wait, eh, eh! Broadcast! I didn't hear anything about that!”

Yes, Shou didn't know anything about it, but he could tell from the way the girls were acting that it was true.

Then he looked at Miron next to him. “Oh,” Miron said, as if remembering. “That's true. You saw those numbers in the lower right corner of the monitor in the hall? That's the number of people who were watching the live broadcast of the war.”

“What?”

“At first, the broadcast was supposed to be limited to the people involved. Well, there were a lot of things happening, and it spread to local commercial broadcasters, and finally to the central network broadcasters. Well, it seems that people all over the galaxy were watching it. Ahahahahaha! If I were a TV producer, I'd get a big promotion!”

“... ... Really?”

“Seriously, though? Oh, and you're underage, so we had a secret wall filter in place, but if anyone watching the broadcast is underage, that thing will come off by itself.”

“... ... yeah.”

Miron replied, and Dird and the others' faces suddenly turned pale, and even the ever-present Dird pulled a face and said, “Seh, Sensei, did you know? But Minamida-san is ... ...”

“Oh, Minamida is the type of person who can't hide things like that, so I didn't tell him. If I had told him, he would have objected.” Miron laughed as if it was someone else's problem and said it in a matter-of-fact manner.

As expected, Dird and the others were indignant at this, and the eyebrows of the five of them rose sharply.

“Hey! Sensei's an idiot ～～～～～～!”

“What have you done to us, Miron!”

“That's terrible, ...!”

“How can you take responsibility for this?”

“No, Sensei, there's no such thing!”

“Ah! Don't you dare come near me! The one who tore you guys apart in the first place is Shou-kun over there!”

“!!!”

All of the girls eyes were instantly drawn to Shou.

“What? It's my fault!” Shou thought about it a little more calmly.

The war on Banjō Island would determine the future for many pirate guilds, so it was only natural that it would attract the attention of the entire galaxy. And when it came to the battle that would decide the outcome, it was no wonder that it was broadcast live. Shou doesn't know how they handle TV in the galaxy, but if you think that it's not much different from that of the Earth, you can't help but broadcast such a special story.

But of all things, it was a baseball fist contest that was broadcasted. And it was Shou who beat the girls and made them take off their clothes. In addition, it was broadcasted to the entire galaxy.

“... ... ah, ha, ha, ha ... ...” Shou couldn't help but laugh ... ... anymore ... ... “Eh, uh ... ... guys, sorry ... ... be...?”

At least, that's what he apologized to Dird and the others.

“... ...Shou?”

“You think apologizing is going to help?”

“... ...It can't be like that.”

“It's not going to happen, is it?”

“... ...Shou-san!” Dird and the others each opened their mouths as wide as they could...

“Take responsibility!”

“Take responsibility, yeah!!!!”

“Take responsibility!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!”

“Please take responsibility!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!”

“Please take responsibility!!!!!!”

“Whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa! Everyone, calm down!”

Shou was attacked by Dird and the others at great speed, and even Miron said, “You guys! What are you doing to my Shou-kun?” Miron jumped on top of them, and the situation was in chaos.

That's when it happened.

It was at that moment that they heard the sound of “Jiririririririririririririri!”

Suddenly there was a violent ringing of a bell, and Shou and the others stopped moving and looked over. The alarm system in the room glowed red and continued to ring loudly.

After a few seconds of delay, a three-dimensional monitor showed the communication image in the room. What appeared on the screen was Minamida, looking bloodthirsty.

“Everyone, we're in trouble!”

Then he said something Shou, and the others hadn't expected.

“A fleet of pirate remnants is approaching Earth! Hurry up and get over here!

Episode 3 - The Future of Paradise

Shou, Dird, Alea, Apuesta, Palty, and Miron were standing in front of a huge tree in the jungle. The tree was a transfer device that led to the place Shou had used as a base during the war.

Originally, there were restrictions on its use, but since it was now an emergency, the restrictions were lifted, and everyone was able to use the device smoothly. Karutia, on the other hand, was on her way to another location to do her job.

So Shou and the others arrived at the base - the place where Minamida was waiting.

There, on a huge 3D video monitor, they saw images of space. And there was a large ship that seemed to be the flagship, and a number of smaller ships surrounding it, forming a fleet, just like Shou had seen in a science fiction movie.

"... ...Minamida-san, what is this?"

Minamida gave a small nod to Shou, who forgot to blink in surprise.

Then, from the monitor image, a voice that seemed to belong to them reached them.

"Attention, people of Earth and Banjō Island. This war has already ended, and our country is now in order. All future matters will be decided by us within our own country, and we will run the country. Therefore, we have no intention of being interfered in our internal affairs by unrelated people from Earth. If Kukoma Shou still wants to come up to space, we will not hesitate to engage in combat. Our demands are that Kukoma Shou relinquish his representation and transfer it to us, that he vacates Banjō Island, and that we be stationed there. We will wait for about an hour for a response to our negotiations. If there is no response in the meantime, we will immediately launch an armed invasion of Banjō Island. I repeat. Earth..."

His voice was domineering, and it was clear to Shou that he had no intention of listening to what Shou had to say. Nearby, Pī and Piyo were chirping as if in protest.

Staring at the image, Minamida spoke to Shou and the others. "It's like, where's the negotiation, but we've been getting these unilateral notices for a while. They are probably a rebel group formed by disgruntled members of the guilds. But in terms of strength, they are quite numerous. Just from what I can confirm, about 30% of all the guilds have gathered."

Shou and the others were shocked by Minamida's words. However, Dird was the only one who didn't seem to understand what was going on, "What? What? What do you mean?" She was confused. Alea speaks to her in a dumbfounded manner.

"They're saying that if we don't listen to them, they'll come here to rampage. You're a roughneck among pirates. They didn't like the way the war was settled, did they?"

"They're going to stage a ... ... coup, is that it?"

"That's right, Apuesta, once the war was settled and the country's appearance was in order, they

probably didn't like Shou, the winner, so they decided to go all out."

Dird gasped at Palty's words, but Shou was equally confused.

"So, they're trying to take the entire planet hostage ... ... But Minamida-san, this is Jurai's direct territory, right? Isn't there a defense force?"

Palty looked at Minamida with sullen eyes, to which Minamida quickly replied.

"As of the end of this battle, Earth has been incorporated into a new nation that includes the Pirate Guild. That's why Earth's defense forces were actually evacuated from the planet at the start of this battle. My Kamidake unit is also at the GP headquarters now. I'm not allowed to enter the solar system until the new system is in place and I'm allowed to be stationed there."

"Oh no, ...! So, we can't even call for help!"

"In other words, it's what they call interference in our internal affairs. Either way, they're already in the solar system. Even if we call for help, it won't be in time."

Shou and the others were shocked by this fact, and Palty continued to speak.

"But ... ..., I can't believe they're suddenly entering our solar system ... ..."

"Perhaps they were infiltrating the solar system little by little to avoid detection by us."

"So, you're saying they've been waiting for this fight to be over for some time? But while it seems to be a good thing that Shou got the representation, what the hell were they going to do if another guild got it ... ...?"

"Earth is a special place. By nature, contact with early civilizations is strictly regulated. Up until now, Jurai has been responsible for that, but once the new government is established, that responsibility will fall on the new government. Moreover, if it is the hometown of the current Jurai Emperor's first wife, her descendants will also be living there."

"I see ... ... If they're going to make enemies of the Galactic Federation and Jurai, there's certainly a reason to hold this place hostage ... ..."

"Oh no ... ..."

Shou was appalled by the exchange between Minamida and Palty; in other words, they were restraining themselves. They are trying to restrain him, and if he doesn't listen to them, they would invade this Earth - Banjō Island.

"Mi, Minamida-san, ...! What are we supposed to do?

"That's..." And when Minamida slurred his words.

"... ... Aargh! You've got to be kidding me! It was Miron, who had been silent until now, who shouted.

She stalked over to the monitor, took the liberty of fiddling with the control panel that Minamida was operating, and turned on the mic, which was attached to it.

“Hey you guys! We're in the middle of a marriage proposal and it's the best moment of our lives! And you guys are ruining it! What's with the armed invasion? Let's do it! Let's see if you can come, you stupid insurgents!”

“!?”

“Wooooooooo! Miss Miron, how dare you!”

A panicked Minamida stopped Miron by scissoring her from behind. However, her earlier words would have already reached the pirates.

Moreover, at that moment, the voice of yet another person suddenly flowed from one of the monitors.

“Well said! That's the spirit of a representative of a new nation! Banjō Island is yours, you can have it!”

It was a female voice that Shou had never heard before. But Minamida knew who it was. He was holding his head in his hands. Shou was puzzled.

Shou said in confusion, “Mi, Minamida-san? I don't know, the way you're talking right now is similar to Miron Sensei's ... ... sense that we shouldn't get involved ... ...”

I guess everyone felt that way. The air in the place froze. And then...

“... ...Hmm. Negotiations have broken down. Then there's no need to wait an hour. We're heading to Earth immediately.”

And then... The voice was cut off.

... ... silence.

Then a shivering Minamida shouted loudly into the monitor.

“Please don't complicate this conversation!”

The owner of the voice - probably a woman - laughed without any offense.

“Oh, I'm just trying to save you the trouble of having to deal with those people someday. It's called birth pains, isn't it?”

“You predicted their coup from the beginning, didn't you? That's why all the defense forces, including Tenchi-senpai, were sent outside to ... ...!”

“Ohohoho. Everyone's relaxing in Jurai, watching the game. Well, you can use all of the forces on Banjō Island.”

“... ... Oh, I see. Please give my regards to ... ...”

Holding his temples, Minamida cut off the transmission with a sigh. Then he turned to Shou and the others and said apologetically. “... ... I'm sorry. That's how it happened ... ...”

And Shou and the others, whose understanding had finally caught up with the contents of the communication, changed their expressions.

“What, what, what? Are you really going to attack us? Or does that mean we're going to fight them ourselves?”

“Moooooo! Because Sensei said something unnecessary!”

“Hey, hey, what are you going to do about Miron?”

“It's too tough for our strength ... ...”

“Sensei, we can't fight that fleet with ... ...!”

“Piyo! Piyo!”

“Oh, ..., you're so annoying! All right, all right! Why don't you talk to me again?”

After being accused by Pī and Piyo, Miron called for communication again, and after confirming that the other side agreed to respond, she raised his voice at the mic. “Wait a minute! You're going to attack this outlying planet with a fleet like that!”

“I intend to, but-”

“Hey, you coward! You know what kind of military power we have!”

“Do I know? This is not a game. This is a battle, a war. That's what you just agreed to, didn't you?”

“Oh, that was just a temper tantrum!”

“Then end the transmission. If you surrender, I'll accept the next transmission.”

Mumbles. The communication was cut off again. The pirates' sneers were the last thing that remained, and it was clear that they were underestimating us.

“Hey! Mookie! What the hell is wrong with those guys!” Miron angrily kicked the control panel away, but the damage was done to her leg, and she crouched down, holding her foot.

“Wait, hey Miron Sensei! What are you really going to do about this?”

“We're going to have to fight those people?”

“How much of a power gap do you think we have? There's no way we can win!”

“... ...Sensei said something unnecessary.”

“Huh? Oh, yeah, I may or may not have said something like that ... ...” Miron, who looked away, was grinning for some reason, and Dird and the others pressed on.

“Ah~! Oh, you said something like that!”

“Sure ... ... hey Miron what did you mean!”

“Sensei ... ...Shou ... ... what do you mean?”

“You should reveal the truth! Sensei, and Shou too!”

“Yeah, me too! I mean, that was a misunderstanding! It was a misunderstanding!”

The conversation suddenly changed, and not only Miron but also Shou was pressed, and Miron was finally pressured by the power of the girls and asked for help.

“Well, that's the ... ... thing, Minamida, don't just look at me, do something!”

“Somehow ... ... haa ... ... you're really a troublesome person to the end, aren't you ... ...?” Minamida, who seemed to have finally calmed down, but still had his head in his hands, gingerly pulled something out of his pocket and walked over to Shou.

“Um, ...Kukoma-kun. You know, you should choose your partner properly.”

“I'm not sure what you're talking about, Minamida-san. I told you that was a misunderstanding! I didn't propose to her! I just asked Sensei to come with me to space!”

This made Dird and the others go “Huh?” Minamida was worried about Shou's future, thinking “He's probably going to push through with this. Minamida was worried about Shou's future. And then...

“What are you doing at a time like this, you idiot? The enemy is already on the move!”

Minamida straightened up as M's shout rang out.

“Oh, no, Kukoma-kun!”

“Huh, what?”

“This belongs to you. Please take it.” With that, Minamida handed me a silver “key”.

“Minamida-san, ...? What is this key?”

“It's the activation key for Banjō Island.”

“What?” Shou and the others all shouted in surprise at the unexpected answer.

“Ki, activation key? What does that mean?”

“Anyway, hurry up and put it here for now. If the fleet over there gets somewhat closer, the people on Earth will indeed notice. If that happens, we'll be in trouble.”

“Ah, ha, yes, I understand!” As he was told, Shou put the key into the slot of the control panel and turned it.

Vion! Immediately, a tremendous number of three-dimensional monitors were activated, and the entire image of the dimly lit room came into clear view.

“What the hell is this place?”

Shou, Dird and the others were astonished. It was a small garden-like area, about the size of a school gymnasium. There were streams of clean water flowing here and there, and there were even plants. What made it different from a normal garden, however, was that there were control panels and operator seats set up everywhere.

“Hey, is this the bridge of a ... ... ship?” It was Palty, who was looking around, who asked.

“Yes, it is. This Banjō Island - it's actually a spaceship camouflaged as an island.”

“... ...What?” What had Minamida just said? Repeating the word in his head several times, ...Shou opened his big mouth and shouted. “Eh, eh, eh, eh, eh, eh! Ugh, a spaceship!”

Shou's eyes nearly popped out of his head in surprise, but to the alien Dird and the others, it wasn't much of a surprise. However, they were puzzled by another fact.

Then, as a representative, Palty asked one thing. “Minamida-san, is this ship ... ... Jurai's ship by any chance?”

“Yeah. It's a fourth generation.”

“!!!” Dird and the others froze, their eyes wide.

In Jurai, there is a spaceship called “Imperial Ship” that has tremendous power. It is a devilishly feared ship for the Pirates, who would surely be annihilated if they met any large fleet. To be precise, it is called the first to third generations, and the younger the generation, the weaker the power. However, even the 4th generation has considerable power. The girls were astonished to know that fact.

“Actually, we're still adjusting, so we're not quite at our full potential, but ... ... we can't say that, can we?”

“Well, uh, ..., can't I just surrender?”

He thought the war was finally over, but then this happened. To be honest, he didn't want to fight, so Shou asked, but Minamida gave him a weak look and said, “If we give up, it means that Kukoma-kun gives up. If that happens, the other side will proudly declare control of the country.

And if we don't do something soon, the people of Earth will find out about the fleet, and we'll be penalized greatly. Perhaps the country that Dird and the others have been able to create will be dismantled."

"Oh no, ..."

Shou was shocked, and Dird and the others interrupted him.

"So, we have to fight and win?"

"I suppose the best thing to do would be to make them surrender. The other side can win, or lose, and we can be penalized, or the situation can be reset and become chaotic again, and we're in trouble.

"That seems to be the goal ... ..."

"It would seem so, sir. Furthermore, depending on how we respond, the Galactic Federation's trust in us may be ruined."

Shou still hadn't caught on, but he couldn't give in anyway. They were already on their way to Earth, so there was no way to escape. Then there was no other way left but to fight.

"Stop messing around and let's go beat up those terrorists! Let's go to space!" Miron was in high spirits. But Minamida shook his head.

"That's right, but it's going to take some time to launch, having allowed nature to breed as the ... ... island. Besides, I'm sure you've already contacted all the places, but we don't have enough people to coordinate the launch. We can't just do it out of the blue."

"But if we don't force the launch, we'll lose!"

Dird followed Miron's lead. "But! There are a lot of animals and fish living on this island. And there's also a lot of fruitful fields!"

If the island were to be forcibly flown as a spaceship, ... what would happen to the flora and fauna of this island? Shou and the others could not argue with Dird's words. They all know firsthand how important the things that had been nurtured on this island were.

"But ... ... no matter how powerful the ship is, if it can't move, it's just a mato ... ...!" Shou struggled, unsure of what to do, then...

"Huh, I see you're in trouble. But don't worry. We'll take care of it!"

"Whoa! Ma, Mike! What are you doing here? And Ichiro-kun, ...!"

Shou was startled by the sudden appearance of his friends, Mike said as he brushed his hair.

"Karutia and the others were alerted by an emergency alert, and they called for our class and everyone else on the island to help maintain the island...well, the ship. We're all working

together to evacuate the animals and create a compacted space that preserves as much of the island's environment as possible, so we should be able to move soon."

"Mike ... ... I see, so Karutia, go to ... ... somewhere!"

"Mike that's awesome, that's awesome!"

"Heh, you do that sometimes."

"I reviewed ... ... just a little bit."

"I'm impressed with ... ...Mike ... ..."

"Hmm. I'm not surprised you do it too."

"Oh, so you've done ... ... it, Mike. I really appreciate it."

Shou and the others were impressed, and Mike brushed his hair and flashed his teeth again in a refreshingly cool manner.

"Nah, haha! It's a small price to pay for this."

"But since you all moved at Karutia's urging, Mike only has to report back to me like this."

"Ichiro! Isn't that tactless!"

Dird and the others sighed deeply at the flustered Mike.

"Nah. Mike is still Mike, isn't he?"

"Oh, no. I guess I missed out on the compliment."

"I disrespected ... ... a lot."

"I'll have you return the compliment, Mike."

"Oh, no! Damn it! This was my chance to raise my stock!"

At such a scene, Shou couldn't help but let out a "pfft".

But thanks to Mike, the atmosphere of desperation and tension dissipated, and Shou and the others were able to get back to their usual routine.

A few moments later, Minamida received reports from various locations that the ship was ready for launch.

The monitors were now showing the current status of Banjō Island, and Shou had been amazed by what he saw. The stone pillars around the shore had been replaced by turrets in their true form.

“Ah, ...! I remember that the rocks in that area looked weirdly bare before, but ... ... that's what it was!” Shou recalled that when he had been flying over the island for training, he had seen some of the stone pillars on the beach peeled off, with a metallic glow peeking out from inside. He hadn't paid much attention to it at the time, but he had never dreamed that the rock had been a turret.

“—Okay, now we can launch at any time.”

At Minamida's words, tension once again filled the place. “The owner of this ship is Kukoma-kun. So, you'll be the one to call for the launch.”

“Oh, ..., I'm the one?”

“You're also the master. Come on, Kukoma-kun.” Minamida gently pushed him back, but ... ... he couldn't speak.

Tension gripped his body. His heart was beating wildly, and he couldn't calm down.

Then Dird and the others all gathered around Shou.

“Don't worry, Shou, we've got your back!”

“Yeah, yeah. Well, if we all go together, we can make it.”

“... ... Let's protect our island and the Earth together, okay?”

“Come on, Shou, let's go into space. We'll follow you.”

“Everyone ... ...”

Dird, Alea, Apuesta, and Palty. The four of them were each smiling at him, and when he saw their expressions, he felt strangely energized. He felt like he could do anything.

“Here, here, Shou-kun. I'll go to this event as I think it's a fitting way for us to start off!”

“Piyo!” “Piyo!”

“Miron Sensei ... ...Pī ... ...Piyo ... ... Hahaha. I feel like my nerves are melting away.”

Surrounded and supported by so many people. Shou uttered the words.

“Okay, ...Banjō Island, depart!”

With Shou's declaration, the tree behind them rustled. From the tips of its leaves, a nerve light like a laser beam shot out towards the terminal.

Vong! Gogo gogo gogo gogo gogo gogo gogo!

A tremendous earth-shaking sound echoed through the air. The island was starting to move.

“Okay, guys! Get the ship to invisibility! Then I'll make a hyperspace jump past the moon's orbit, surprise the enemy fleet approaching Earth, and bring it to a short battle!”

Minamida gave the command, and the four Cabbits moved to their respective positions - the control panels.

“Yes, sir!”

(Wow, ..., the world of science fiction.) Shou thought that such a scene looked like a real spaceship, and then he thought again that this was real, and laughed a little.

The invisible Banjō Island moved directly into space and came to the orbit of the moon.

Shou was so overwhelmed by the images of space on the monitor that he forgot to breathe, but that wasn't the point now.

“Come on, we're about to jump. Everyone, get ready.”

“Ha, yes.”

At Minamida's words, Shou and the others each tried to adjust their Guardians.

It would be easy to annihilate the enemy by force here. But they couldn't do that. Because they are still important human resources as citizens of the new nation. The original purpose of the battle on Banjō Island was to avoid unnecessary fighting and to unify the nation in peace. To annihilate the opponent here and leave a grudge would be contrary to the philosophy of Shou and his team. At any rate, it was vital to show the other party that they could overcome any obstacle.

For this reason, Minamida first made a surprise attack on the pirates attacking Banjō Island, and while they were confused, Dird and the others would use the Guardians to enter the enemy flagship. They proposed a plan to end the battle by forcing the commanders to surrender, and this plan was put into action.

“Okay, ..., I'll do my best not to cause trouble for everyone!” The truth is, Shou was scared, but he was determined to do his best.

“No, Shou~!”

“Whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa.”

“Huh? Huh? Oh, I'm not allowed?” Shou was stopped by Dird and Alea, who both grabbed his hand.

“Shou is a representative of ... ... Earth. It's too dangerous to go ... ...”

“Apuesta is right, Shou, you are the one we need to protect the most right now. We can' let you go into the enemy ship. Besides, even with a certain amount of training, Shou is not a professional fighter in body or mind.”

“Oh, no! But then everyone will be ... ...!”

Shou was struck with anxiety, but Dird and the others all smiled and--

“It's going to be fine, Shou!”

“Just leave it to us and watch from on high.”

“... ... Yeah. We can't lose.”

“Shou, please believe in us.” The four of them said kindly, wiping away Shou's anxiety.

“Everyone ... ...” So Shou thought about what he should do. Then he calmly decided that he should follow the girls' instructions and nodded.

“... ... Okay. I'll be waiting for you guys to get back!”

“Yeah!”

“Understood.”

“Okay.”

“Yes.” The four of them smiled at him. Their smiles warmed Shou's heart.

Then Cabbit M turned to Dird and the others and said, “Oh wait. We'll maintain and strengthen everyone's armaments.”

“Huh?”

Dird, Alea, and Palty all chimed in as M looked at Apuesta and continued.

“She's going to release the inventory of equipment she had.”

“Apuesta? Are you sure?”

“Hey, seriously? I'm not going to be able to pay you later, am I?”

“Apuesta ... ... is it good?”

“... ... Yeah. I'm not really in the mood for that right now.”

Apuesta was quiet, but when Shou and the others thought about what she was thinking when she nodded like that and offered her armament, their hearts burned.

“Minamida-kun. Can't we at least help with this? We're still Shou-kun's mechanics, you know.”

“Shou-oniichan and the others have to win, don't they!”

“Yes. We can't let them lose, can we?”

“... ... perfect maintenance.”

“Everyone ... ... haha, that's right. I'm sure he's already aware of that much.”

Minamida smiled, and the Cabbits helped Dird and the others strengthen their maintenance.

M, F, K, and D. Shou was impressed by the cooperation of the four Cabbits - or rather, the girls. If everyone worked together like this, they might be able to do something. I have to work hard for that. He thought strongly.

While Dird and the others were working at a rapid pace to strengthen their equipment, Minamida received a call and saw a local network program on one of the monitors.

“Ladies and gentlemen of the Galactic Federation! I hope you are watching this.

We have just received a sudden and unilateral notice from a group of pirates! They want us to keep the winner of the battle, Kukoma Shou-san, out of space! We believe that they have taken this action in order to create their own country as they see fit! Gentlemen! Please don't misunderstand us! We are not running amok! In this broadcast, I, Karutia Zokeru, will tell you the truth and nothing but the truth!”

“Ah ... ...Karutia-san!”

The monitor showed Karutia speaking with a mic in her hand. In the background was the landscape of Banjō Island, where Shou's lookout had used her internet program to relay the truth to the Galactic Federation.

“It's Karutia! That's awesome!”

“I see. So, this means we don't have to worry about the Galactic Federation misunderstanding us in any weird way.”

“... ... Yeah, Karutia is amazing.”

“That's what I call an idol. We have to do our best for her!”

“Everyone ... ... that's right! Okay, let's definitely make this mission a success!”

At Shou's determined declaration, Dird and the others raised their hands, “Oh!” and raised their morale.

“Minamida-kun! I'm done reinforcing everyone's Guardians!” M said, and Minamida gave a big nod.

“Good... then I'll leave the rest to you, Miss Miron.”

And just at that moment, Minamida started to move, and Shou and the others panicked, “What?”

Shou and the others panicked. Then Miron spoke as if to stop them.

“Hey Minamida, you're leaving me in charge, but the fight is just beginning, remember?”

“Yes. But I'm a GP. I'm supposed to be on the sidelines.”

“But that doesn't mean you're going to come all the way here and abandon Shou-kun and the others?”

“Don't worry. I'm sure they can handle it. Think about it ... ...Dird and the others were the representatives of each guild, right? Even though many of them were tossed around, and many of them were poorly chosen, there's still a reason why they were chosen to represent us.”

“... ... Oh.”

“Yes, these girls are the strongest warriors of their respective guilds.”

“Come on, D. M, F, and K are in charge of things over here.”

When Shou heard Minamida's words, he was appalled because he didn't understand what they meant, M was on his head, F and K were on both of his shoulders, and D jumped on Minamida's shoulder.

“Then I'll leave you in charge of leading the students, Miron Sensei. And good luck, Kukoma-kun. I'm sure you'll be able to get through this crisis.”

With that, Minamida ran out of the bridge, where he quickly disappeared.

“Hey! Minamida!”

“Ms. M? Um, where the hell is Minamida-san going ... ...?”

“He has his part to play, you know. Here.”

As if in response to M's voice, a three-dimensional monitor was activated in front of Shou and the others. On it was an image of a deep underwater cave called the Blue Hole, located near the port of Banjō Island.

“... ...What? What, what is it?” At that moment, Shou's eyes caught sight of something unbelievable.

To his surprise, a huge humanoid-like object emerged from the depths of the Blue Hole, breaking the surface of the sea and creating a huge wave.

“What? A robot!” Shou couldn't believe his eyes; it was indeed a robot, but it looked like it was wearing armor, and it looked somewhat like a Western knight.

“That's ZINV ... ... his other ship.”

“Huh, a ship? I thought you said it was a robot?”

Voooooooooon!

The ZINV, as it was called, let out a tremendous yell and gallantly flew away toward the Earth. Surprised by the image, Shou and Miron each opened their mouths in amazement.

“Wow, ..., that's so cool!” Shou's eyes lit up, and M giggled.

“Boys really like giant robots, don't they? He's going to put a secret wall around the earth with ZINV now.”

“What! He can do that?”

“Yes, ZINV has more power than this ship. It's a no-brainer.”

“Oh, really? ... ... something, that's amazing. Hahaha ... ...”

“That's because we don't want the Earthlings to detect this battle in case it happens.”

Dird and the others were also astonished by the appearance of the ZINV.

“Muu ... ...Minamida's got something like that hidden away! No wonder my country's nuclear submarine was so easily sunk.” Miron grunted in agreement, and M continued.

“And besides, once we put a secret wall around the Earth, we can fight with all our might without any reservations!”

M popped Shou's head with her ear, and for some reason, Miron was motivated to say.

“Oh! That sounds great! Let's do it! Hey, you guys!”

“What? Uh-huh! I'll do my best too!”

“Haha, ..., I can't help it!”

“We'll definitely ... ... win ... ...!”

“Let's all work together to win!”

Inspired by the rampaging Miron, Dird, Alea, Apuesta and Palty also tightened their expressions. Shou couldn't help but be inspired by this.

“Alright then, let's go everyone! Hyperspace program, load!”

At M's signal, F and K jumped down from Shou's shoulders and started to move, and the graphics of loading the program appeared on the monitor in front of Shou. And they were ready.

“Program loading complete! Shou-kun, hyperspace jump, let's go!”

“Ha, yes! Hyperspace jump!”

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“Okay, we're going to go into a hyperspace jump and approach the Earth. That way, we'll be able to take advantage of the ones that are behind us and get rid of them.”

“Copy that! Hyperspace jump, begin preparations!”

“Hun ... ..., you're fooling us by deciding the winner in that way. And that the winner is an Earthling ... ... How can we accept such a thing? We will make our own country.”

The large flagship that sat in the center of the fleet - the man who mumbled with his arms folded on the bridge, the command center, was the leader of the pirates who were targeting Shou and his crew. His upturned hair style indicated his wild personality.

The men beside him followed his lead and said, “It's impossible for us to lose, but you never know what the people of Earth are capable of.”

“Hmm. Just in case, we should beat them thoroughly here.”

“That's good. Let's show them what we can do.”

The fearless men laughed and laughed.

It was then.

“! Chi, Earth's response has disappeared!”

“What the hell?”

The next moment, the operator's voice sounded like a scream.

“Zzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzz!”

Suddenly the ship shook violently, startling the men, and the man with the upturned hair unfolded his arms.

“Hey, what the hell! What's happening! Hey! Report!”

“Hey, enemy shadow! We're under attack!”

“What are you talking about? The Earth's response has disappeared, and now you're saying it's an enemy shadow? There's no way something like that could be in a place like this...”

The men looked. They saw the back of a ship - the figure of a large ship that was firing in unison towards them.

“What the hell is that ... ... ship? There's no such thing on Earth!

“Wah, I don't know! I don't know!”

“Damn ... ... hyperspace jump! Well, what can one ship do? Fleet, move to intercept position immediately!”

“Yes, sir!”

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“Okay, the ambush worked! Everyone, hurry up and go while you still can!”

“Yes!”

With the hyperspace jump, Shou and the others appeared right behind the enemy fleet and succeeded in their surprise attack. The current Banjō Island had enough armaments to fight the enemy, however, they couldn't destroy the enemy ship. Therefore, as planned, the figure of this Banjō Island that had become a ship was used as a decoy to draw the enemy's attention, while Dird and the others went to occupy the enemy ship - its bridge - with their Guardians.

“Dird, Alea, Apuesta, are we clear? Our Guardians are obsolete. If we get hit by a high-powered rifle at close range, that's it. Therefore, we should avoid combat as much as possible, and if we do fight, it is preferable to focus on evasion and play a speed game.”

“Understood!” Dird and the others obeyed Palty's warning. The girls were also ready.

“Shou, then, I'll finish it right away!”

“It's a pain in the ass, but it's the only way! Let's go!”

“Shou ... ..., I'm off!”

“I'm off, Shou!”

“Good luck, everyone!”

“Yes! Dird, Alea, Apuesta, Palty, everyone, be careful!

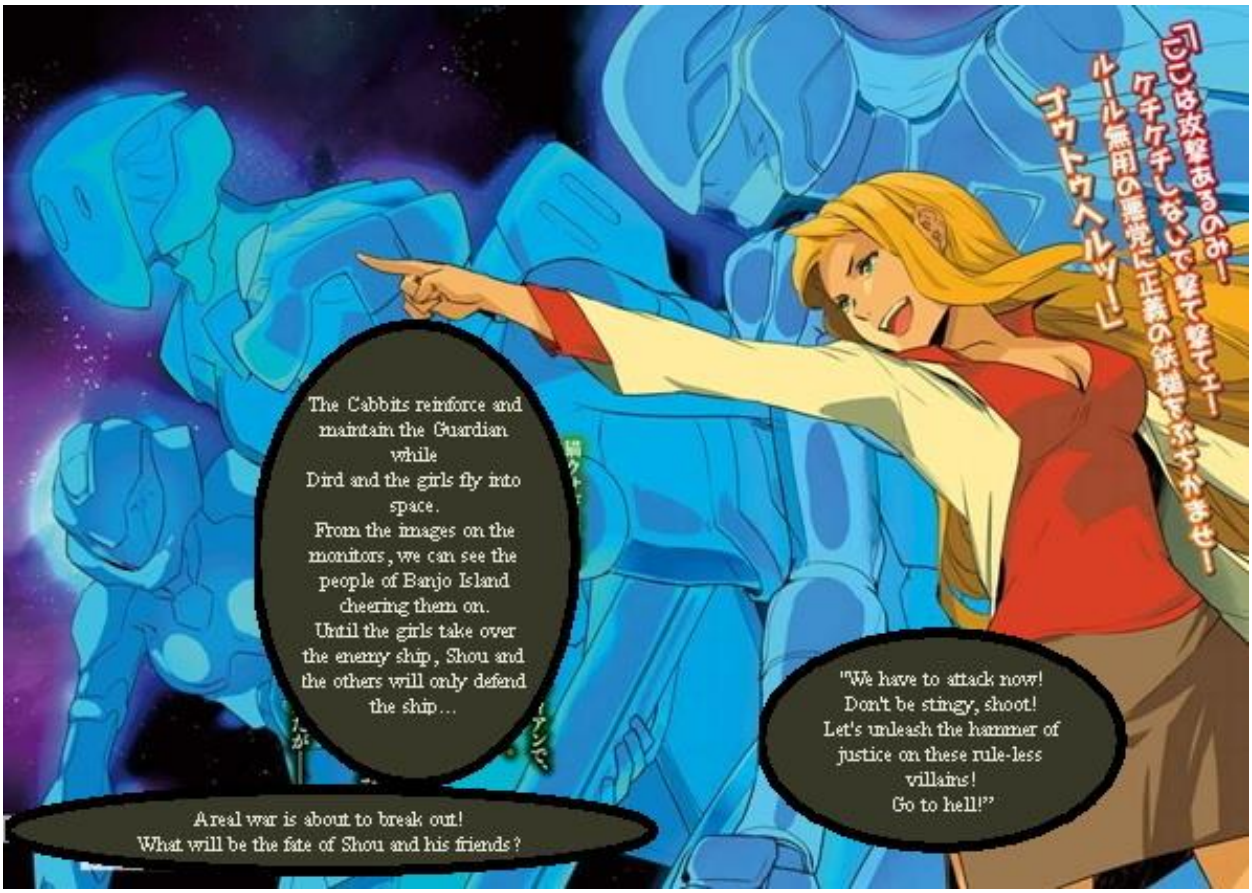
With the Guardians maintained and reinforced by the Cabbits, Dird and the others flew out into space. From the images of various parts of Banjō Island on the various monitors, they could see that the islanders were cheering them on loudly. Now all Shou and the others had to do was put up their shields and defend until the girls took over the enemy ship...

“Shit! We can't win if all we do is defend.”

“Wha~! Sensei, no!”

“Oh no, you're from a country that loves mass battles ... ... You're in trouble.”

F and K were baffled by Miron's outburst, and Shou and M rushed to stop her.


The Cabbits reinforce and maintain the Guardian while
Dird and the girls fly into space.
From the images on the monitors, we can see the people of Banjo Island cheering them on.
Until the girls take over the enemy ship, Shou and the others will only defend the ship...
"We have to attack now!
Don't be stingy, shoot!
Let's unleash the hammer of justice on these rule-less villains!
Go to hell!"
A real war is about to break out!
What will be the fate of Shou and his friends?

All Shou could do now was to wish Dird and the others good luck and try to minimize the damage to Banjō Island and its inhabitants.

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Dird and the others went out into space and successfully infiltrated the enemy's flagship with Shou and the others acting as decoys. However, the hard part was yet to come.

“Everyone, this way!”

Following Dird, who was running in the lead, the four of them ran as fast as they could towards the central unit where the bridge was located. On the way, they almost ran into enemy pirates several times, but the number of enemies was smaller than they expected, and thanks to that, they were able to avoid contact just in time. It seemed that the pirates hadn't noticed that they had infiltrated yet, but it couldn't take too long. The longer it took, the more Banjō Island, where Shou and the others were staying, would be in danger.

However, Dird and the girls were nimble and very good at avoiding being noticed by the enemy. This was the ability of the girls, who were trained as pirates and combat professionals.

Finally, they arrived at a passage close to the bridge. Each of them was hiding behind the

passage, catching their breath.

“Phew~. It looks like it's just up ahead.”

“Finally. Hey, is everyone ready to go?”

“... ... Yeah.”

“We're good. Come on, let's go before they notice.”

Nodding to each other, Dird and the girls rushed into the command center at once, each with their Guardian activated for control!

But...

“...Checkmate. That's enough.”

“!!!” As Dird and the girls entered the bridge, they were greeted by... well, a lot of gunfire.

The men in command chuckled, and one of them said, “Hmm. That old-fashioned Guardian won't be able to defend against our attacks. If you understand, then give up quickly.”

The men sneered. Dird and the others shuddered at their disgusting smiles.

Immediately, a large number of pirates came through the entrance and surrounded the girls. There were so many of them that there was no way they could escape.

Then their leader - the captain's man with his hair pulled up - stood up and said, “I was a little surprised by the sudden surprise attack, but ... ... using the ship as bait, a small assault force occupied the center of the enemy ship - a brilliant pirate strategy, but did you forget that we are also pirates? If you know the purpose, it's easy to ambush them like this.”

“Oh, no ... ...”

The man pointed a new gun at the trembling girls. They had been framed. The exit was already blocked, and more importantly, they were already in the middle of the ship. With their infiltration exposed, it would be impossible to escape from here.

Above all, their hostility was clear, and they had the eyes of pirates who simply didn't care if they kill them. It was their eyes that made Dird and the others understand the seriousness of the situation.

“Still, I suppose we could have managed with a battle-ready Guardian. You can understand that we can't agree to such a thing, deciding the fate of our country with a game that can't even be called a battle, where we're familiar with such old-fashioned toys, right?”

“Ugh ... ...”

“Damn it, ..., is this where it ends?”

“... ... Oh no.”

“So much for ... ...”

It's impossible for Dird and the others to deal with everyone instantly in a place like this.

The captain's man looked at the girls and said, “Originally, we would have disposed of them all here, but ... ... we can overlook the children's roughness.”

“Huh?”

“I thought I told you what we wanted.”

The man smirked, holding a gun to Dird and the others, and says, “You're watching, right? Kukoma Shou, the fate of these people is in your hands.”

On the other side of the monitor the man was looking at - was a confused Shou.

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A monitor in front of Shou, M and the others. It was now showing the scene of Dird and the girls being held at gunpoint by the enemy man.

“Mi, guys!”

The voice then reached Shou and the others.

“You're watching, right? Kukoma Shou, the fate of these people depends on you.”

Large beads of sweat flowed from Shou's forehead. A tremendous sense of tension enveloped the place.

“Transfer of the right to represent the Earth. And staying on Earth ... This condition has changed to surrender the ship. If you agree to that condition, all these girls will be released safely. Of course. It also guarantees the safety of the crew of the ship.”

“If I ... ... the ... ... conditions?”

“You'll have to make a formal declaration of transfer to the Galactic Federation, though. If you refuse, you do understand what will happen ... ... to you, even if you are a less civilized earthling, right?”

He understood. If Shou refused the terms here, ...Dird and the girls' lives would be lost. It was the last thing he wanted.

But if he gave in, the future that Dird and the girls did not want may come. That, too, was more painful than anything else for Shou.

He didn't know what to do. He couldn't decide.

“Hah, hah, hah, hah ... ...!”

Shou struggled with a variety of emotions: impatience, anxiety, nervousness... His eyes shook, his breath became ragged, and his heart beat faster and harder than ever before. His actions would determine everything from here on out. It was understandable. After all, even Miron was clenching her teeth in frustration, unable to refute anything.

At that time, M pretended to be a mere animal pawing at Shou's shoulder and mumbled something in Shou's ear that the men could not hear.

“Shou-kun, calm down and listen carefully. Those kids...”

“...!” Hearing this, Shou's strength returned to his eyes. Shou calmed his breathing and looked at the monitor.

“... ... If I agree to those conditions, Dird and the girls will be saved, right?”

“Yeah, I promise you that. You're not supposed to need any representation in the first place, are you? All you have to do is declare the transfer and these kids will be saved. I think that's a good deal, don't you?”

“..... .....”

The Dird in the monitor shouted at Shou, who fell silent. “Shou! No! No, no, no!”

“Hey Shou, you can't do that!”

“There's a new country ... ... for these people ... ...”

“You'll be in big trouble! Shou!” Dird and the others' sorrowful cries. But that didn't mean they couldn't be sacrificed.

So Shou - troubled, he repeatedly made the gesture of scratching his cheek.

“──!” Seeing Shou's action, Dird and the others opened their eyes slightly as if they understood something. However, the pirate men didn't notice that.

And at the same time, F and K were sneaking around the gap and operating the ship's control panel.

“Well, what do we do now? I'm sorry, but I'm not going to wait too long. You've got one minute to decide.”

There was one minute left.

M, who was riding on Shou's shoulder, glanced at F and K. Then F and K each gave a small smile and a small nod in return.

“──Shou-kun.”

When M called him, Shou also gave a small nod. Then he clenched his fists tightly, gulped and looked up at the monitor.

“ ... ... I understand.”

“! Shou!”

“But first, you have to let the girls go. Otherwise, I can't give my consent.”

“... ... Hun. All right. You guys, put your guns down.” The captain's man ordered, and the other commanders and crew members lowered their guns in unison.

“That should do it, right? Now, declare it Kukoma Shou.”

“.....”

“What's up. Hurry up.”

“Shou ... ...!”

Shou shivered, and Dird and the others looked at him with great concern... “... ... everyone.” Shou remembered the words that M had said earlier.

“Shou-kun, calm down and listen carefully. Their Guardians are equipped with the acoustic weapon, which can be activated at any time by you, so when you find the right time, say this...”

And then Shou said the words. “'Sensor off'!”

Dird and the others immediately understood what that meant and took action.

“Sensors? ... ... You can't be serious! You guys turn off the sensors right now.”

“It's too late!”

Gigigigigigigigigigigigigigigigig!!

Hyaaaaaaaaa!?

For those living in space, it is the foundation of their lives, the hull that protects them. The sound of it crushing is not only physiologically damaging, it is also the sound of life ending. There is no one who can remain calm after being hit by it. All of the pirates collapsed on the spot with agonized expressions on their faces.

“Now! F! K!”

“Yes!” Copy that!”

M signaled, and F and K both took control of their control panels and opened fire on the entire enemy pirate fleet at once! They had secretly sighted the enemy fleet earlier and locked onto the

engine section. Then they waited for the time when Shou would make that statement.

“Guhhhhhhhhh!”

The agonized screams of the men issued from the monitors. All of the gunfire hit the enemy fleet. They succeeded in damaging the engineering sections of all the ships, rendering them unable to maneuver.

In the next moment, Dird and the girls who had turned on their sensors again beat all the pirates at once and stuck each one of them to the wall with restraining gel.

Thus, control of the place was completed in no time at all.

“Guh ... ... ki, you ... ...!”

Right in front of the girls, the captain's man with swollen cheeks let out an annoyed voice. The discomfort from the acoustic weapon seemed to be stronger than the pain from the beating, and some of them were even vomiting.

Dird, Alea, Apuesta, and Palty turned the guns they had taken from them, this time on the cadre of pirates, and looked at Shou through the monitor.

“Hey guys, ...!”

To Shou's delight, Dird and the others all broke into smiles, and then said out shouted.

“Checkmate! Now, surrender!”

The pirates, perhaps in awe of the sound weaponry, but they didn't even have the energy to fight back anymore, they just nodded their heads.

Epilogue.

Dird and the others all returned safely to Banjō Island and Shou. Minamida also came back on ZINV.

“Kukoma-kun! Everyone! You've done well!”

“Minamida! And welcome back to ... ..., everyone!” Shou welcomed the girls to the sandy beach in front of Shou's tent near the base. Many people from all over the island had already gathered there, all waiting for Dird and the others to arrive.

Dird was the first to express her joy. “Ahaha! Shou awesome, awesome, awesome!!!”

“Wow, Dird!”

As soon as they landed on the spot, Dird disarmed her Guardian and hugged Shou with all her might; Shou managed to catch her, but the momentum caused her to spin around. Seeing this, Alea, Apuesta and Palty smiled happily.

“I don't know how long you've been wearing that thing on our Guardian, but Shou's cheek gesture gave it away.

“... ..., but it saved our lives ... ...”

“Hmm, I was surprised to see that weapon again ... ... in such a place.”

“What? I mean, didn't you guys know about that weapon too?”

Shou was surprised, then M chuckled and said, “On Earth, they say that to deceive your enemy, you must first deceive your allies.”

“Oh, so that's why you didn't tell me until just before ... ...?”

“That's what I meant. But I'm glad you all survived. That's Shou-kun, the winner of the Baseball Fist Tournament. The timing couldn't have been more perfect for ... ... after you made the enemy put down their guns.”

“Haha ... ... Oh no, it's not me, it's everyone. Thank you all for noticing me so quickly.”

The coordination in that place was a momentary blip. However, Dird and the others immediately recognized that the only action Shou could take - using the sound weapon - was a good idea. That's why he succeeded. And it was a strategy that would never have succeeded if he had not been at war with Dird and the others on this island. If they hadn't known about that acoustic weapon, ... if they hadn't known in advance about the countermeasure to turn off the sensor, it would have neutralized Dird and the others right there.

“Ehehe. But even after I turned off the sensor, it still echoed a bit, so I got goosebumps.”

“That's true. I knew that weapon was bad. Foul, foul, foul.”

“... ... Yeah. But thanks to that, we all made it back safely ... ...”

“That's right, Shou, thank you again.”

“Oh no, ... I'm the one who has to say it! Thank you, everyone!”

At Shou's thanks, Dird and the others all smiled, and the four Cabbits, M, F, K, and D, all smiled happily. Shou knew very well that the success of the mission was due in large part to the help of the girls. So, he thanked them for their help.

“No, thank you for your hard work. Those pirates will be taken to the GP soon, so don't worry about the rest.”

“Minamida-san ... ... haha! I'm really glad we managed to do something.”

“Piyoo!” “Piyooo!”

“Haha. Apparently, these kids are happy, too.”

“Haha, thanks for the support, Pī and Piyo, too.”

He called into the incubator, to which Pī and Piyo responded with happy squeals of their own.

Then came Karutia next, her eyes sparkling, and her hands folded.

“That was amazing, Shou-san! I never thought you'd actually beat up a pirate ... ...!”

“Oh, Karutia-san! Karutia-san, thank you also for relaying the news.”

“No, I'm such a ... ... help to you all!”

“Yes! It's only with everyone's help, Shou!”

It was Mike who interrupted the conversation, and Shou was truly grateful to him as well, even as he ruffled his hair.

“Thanks to Mike too. I don't know what I would have done without you guys ... ...”

Mike, Ichiro and their classmates all laughed at Shou's words, and Dird and the others were smiling as well.

“Shou and everyone, you did a really good job. Let me thank you on behalf of everyone on the island.”

“Oh, Tomi-san! Thank you very much, too!”

“It was nothing, really.”

“Yeah, yeah, well done. That's my students.”

It was Miron who was sitting on the floor with a satisfied look on her face. They all stared at her with disgusted faces.

“Haha, ... Whose fault do you think it was that we got into all that trouble?”

“What?”

“It's because Miron Sensei suddenly provoked the other party.”

Shou said crisply, and Dird and the others nodded deeply, “Yes, yes.”

“Shou, don't you think we should stop taking Miron Sensei into space?”

“Yeah, yeah. At this rate, you'll be in trouble everywhere you go.”

“Ummmmm ... ...” Shou pondered with a difficult look on his face.

“What? But! Well, that ... ...” Miron looked really uncomfortable at this, and then whispered, “... ... I'm sorry.” And then she shrugged like a scolded puppy.

Shou gave a small laugh at her. “Well, next time, please don't say things like that out of the blue, because it's usually me who has to clean up Sensei's mess.”

Shou told her with a sigh, and Miron looked up happily.

“E ... ..., then.”

“You didn't give me an answer yet, did you? You see, I'm asking you to come to space with me ... ... Oh, and just so you know, I'm not proposing to you.”

“Hey Shou, but we're already in space, aren't we?”

“Oh, I see ... ... I feel like I'm asking a strange question, haha.”

Shou laughed at Dird, but Miron looked at him with serious eyes.

“... ... Are you sure you want it to be me?”

“Well, there's only one Miron Sensei.”

“Only me? ... ... Yes, you're right, I'm the only one for Shou. That's right! Then it can't be helped!” Miron suddenly regained her usual energy and said with a big smile on her face.

“All right! I'll go with you! You should be so grateful, Shou-kun! I'm a genius and it's an honor for me to go with you!”

“Dird, Minamida, and everyone else in the room laughed in amusement as Miron angrily said, “What? Hey you guys! What are you laughing at?”

And so, it seemed that everything had been resolved successfully ... ...

“Yes, yes, yes. Well done, well done, well done, well done!”

In the midst of all this, a woman, the former owner of Banjō Island, suddenly came on the line. At the sound of her voice, Shou and the others' gazes simultaneously turned to the three-dimensional monitor that was displayed.

“Now, ...Kukoma Shou-dono. It's good that you defeated the rebels of the guild, but we've got a bit of a problem.”

“What? What do you mean? What do you mean by that, ...?” Shou asked timidly as the atmosphere became tense.

And the answer came right back. “Now that the new nation is officially established, it means that Shou-dono and his group of friends are the strongest in the new nation. In other words, ...”

Minamida was the first to frown, probably having guessed what was coming.

“Shou-dono has been chosen to represent the new nation.”

There was a pause of several seconds. After which, Shou's mouth fell open. “Eh, eh, eh, eh, eh, eh, eh, eh, eh, eh, eh!”

His astonished voice echoed throughout the island.

To which, of course, not only Shou, but everyone present was equally stunned.

“The Galactic Federation has also officially approved it, so we're going to have an approval ceremony, so please show up over here for a bit.” As she said this, the woman who was the former owner gave a final “tut” that sounded like a thrown kiss, and then cut off the communication.

“What, what? What's going on, ...Minamida-san? What did she mean? Confused, Shou looked at Minamida, shaking uncontrollably.

“Well ... ..., well ... ..., it's just as you heard ... ...”

“Just as I heard it, no way!”

“Kkkkk! It's like you tightened up the bad guys and became a gang leader, Shou-kun!”

“Ouch!” Then Miron slapped Shou's back with a bang and leaned in close.

“That means I'm the first lady here! Ahahahahahaha!”

“What? What are you talking about, Sensei?”

“That's right, Sensei! I don't know, but it's not fair ～～～～!”

“What are you saying in the confusion, Miron?”

“... ..., no!”

“Sensei, the proposal was a misunderstanding! I don't approve of that development!”

“What? What are you doing? Kiii! Don't try to grab me!”

Dird and the rest of the group attacked Miron, who was out of control again. The battle of the women started right there, and Shou quickly took refuge behind Minamida as if to escape.

“Well, ... Kukoma-kun. In the meantime, now that this has happened, let's take Banjō Island and head for the Galactic Federation. Either way, we were planning to go there as ambassadors for Earth, you know.”

“An envoy, sir? But ... ...”

“I understand your apprehension. But you have dependable friends. And me, of course. Oh, and I'll make sure you come back to Earth. I promise.”

Relieved by Minamida's smiling words, Shou looked at Dird and Miron, who were arguing with each other, and it was so funny that Shou couldn't help but let out a “pfft”.

“This is a place that Earthlings are not supposed to reach. But if you want, you can go as far as you want.”

At that moment, the entire sky of the island suddenly projected the universe.

“Wow ... ...”

Shou was struck by the overwhelming sight.

There were more stars shining brightly than when he and Miron had looked up that night - that night. Dird and Miron, who had been battling with each other, stopped their battles and looked at the scene.

Shou, of course, was astonished at the suddenness of the event.

However, his mind was strangely calm.

Dird.

Alea.

Apuesta.

Palty.

Miron.

And Karutia, Mike and the others, and all of his classmates....

All the people he had met on this island were looking at him with smiles on their faces.

Shou was anxious, but the anticipation was more than enough to lift his spirits.

"... ... Okay. I'll go!"

Hearing Shou's answer, everyone applauded Shou. Shou laughed shyly and bowed his head, then Dird and the others came and said, "Wow! So now we can be with Shou again!"

"Well, it looks like we're going to be friends with Shou and Dird and the others for a long time."

"... ... Yeah. I think so too."

"Hmm. When I first came to Earth, I never imagined that this would happen."

"Everyone ... ... yeah, keep up the good work!"

Shou said, and Dird and the others all smiled and responded.

But...

"So, Shou, what do we do now?"

"Alea, what are you going to do about ... ... what?"

"Well, you know, you just ended the conversation in the middle of nowhere. It's about Baseball Fist."

"... ... Ah." A cold sweat broke out on Shou's back.

"Because of Shou, the whole galaxy saw us high school girls in our undressed state. I was wondering how Shou would take responsibility for that."

Shou had forgotten all about the pirate riot.

But because of Alea, Dird, Apuesta, and Palty remembered that, too. "Yes, that's right! I'm so embarrassed because of Shou!"

"... ... Yeah, Shou should take responsibility."

"You're absolutely right, Shou, how do you plan to take responsibility?"

"Well, uh, ... that's, uh, ..." Shou retreated slowly, but Dird and the others were closing in.

"Oh, by the way, I was being watched too ... ... Ugh, what should I do?"

"Shou-san! What am I supposed to do? Can you take responsibility for me?"

“What? Even Karutia-san!”

“Shou-kun! I don't care about these little girls! You've got to take responsibility for me now that I'm your guardian! Isn't that right?”

“Yeah, yeah! I don't get it! I don't understand!” Cornered, Shou immediately activated his Guardian. He then quickly flew away.

“Ah, he's gone! Wait here - Shou～～～～!”

“Shou's using the Guardian! Hey guys, let's go after him!”

“Yes, sir.”

“You can't run, Shou!”

“Shou-san! Please take responsibility for what you've done. ～～～～”

“Wait! Wait, Shou! I won't let you escape! I'll chase you to the end of the universe just like you said!”

Dird, Alea, Apuesta, Palty, Karutia, and even Miron, who had not been undressed by Shou, came after them. Their classmates cheered them on, Mike and the boys cheered Shou on, and Tomi and the other islanders laughed at them.

“Good grief. It looks like the universe is going to get noisy again.” Even Minamida smiled as he said that, along with the Cabbits and Pī and Piyo.

In the midst of all this, Shou was the only one running around with tears in his eyes.

“Oh my god! Somebody help me, please!” He shouted so loudly that it seemed to roar throughout this universe - the galaxy.

〈End〉

“Paradise War” Afterword Commentary - Kajishima Masaki

Paradise War” takes place on Earth about ten years after “GXP”. Minamida (Yamada Seina) is the protagonist of GXP, which is also closely related to the origins of Paradise War. GXP is about Minamida (Yamada Seina), so if you're interested, you may want to read that as well to enjoy the world of the game even more.

Kukoma Shou was just an ordinary high school student living in a provincial city in a small country called Japan on Earth. He came to Banjō Island by chance, got involved in a battle, and eventually won a banquet game called Yakyuken (Baseball Fist), which made him the Prime Minister, Secretary General, and President of Earth. Eclipsing anything of that status, he became the representative of a small coalition of nations that included Earth. Of course, even though it is small, it is still on a cosmic scale, spanning several tens of light years, so to the present earthlings, it is an endlessly vast and unreachable unknown territory. And when I say we've jumped over everything, I'm only talking about from a galactic scale perspective. From the Earth's perspective, Shou is just another citizen. With the exception of a very few, Earthlings will only be aware of Shou's status when they acquire interstellar navigation technology and is recognized as a member of the Galactic Federation. It will take at least several thousand more years.

Although I didn't explain it in detail in the text, let me explain a little about Banjō Island, where the story takes place.

Banjō Island was originally an ordinary spaceship with no plants or trees growing on it. However, it is a quasi-Imperial Ship class ship, and its computer unit and energy generator, the fourth-generation “Imperial Tree,” is as powerful as the sun. It was only two and a half years before Shou came to Banjō Island, just before the “Paradise War” project started, that the spaceship was docked there.

So, how did they transform an ordinary spaceship into such a lush island? First, they fixed the spaceship in that position and then attached rocks and soil around it, making it look like a giant potted plant. Then, using the ecology of the nearby islands as a reference, they planted a variety of earth plants that live at that latitude with as much diversity as possible, while also releasing the necessary organisms. From there, a shield covered about a hundred kilometers around Banjō Island, isolating the space within it and accelerating time.

Artificial sunlight, rainfall clouds, wind, and other substances that might be carried by the wind are synthesized or harvested from the outside world and rained on the inner surface of the shield and controlled so that there is as little difference as possible from the outside environment. Of course, they carefully adjusted the internal environment and circulated the ecological cycle, while eliminating mutant species and making sure that Banjō Island would not adversely affect the global environment. In this way, thousands of years pass in internal time, building and stabilizing the environment.

From the point of view of the people of Earth, this technology is like magic, but from the point of view of Dird and her team, although it is advanced technology, it is civilian level technology. However, in order to accelerate time and adjust the environment on the scale of Banjō Island, a

facility on the scale of the moon would normally be required, and the fourth generation Imperial Tree took its place. However, one thing about this is that it is beyond the private sector level. And with this power, even after going up into space while maintaining the environment, it still has enough power to be a combat ship. Let's get back to the story. In about a year of external time, Banjō Island has become what it is today, but thousands of years have passed in its internal space. In the meantime, it would take almost a lifetime for a human being to enter there and monitor the adjustments, which is indeed a bit overwhelming. So, although the environmental designer will occasionally check in, we will mostly use nanomachines to automatically adjust growth. Finally, the shield was removed, and Banjō Island was completed after another year of adaptation to the outside environment. It is the birth of the isolated island in the south that feels completely comfortable, although this is still quite accelerated in terms of natural history.

“Banjō Island was awarded as a prize for winning the Paradise War, but from the perspective of the Galactic Federation, it's quite an unbelievable prize. In particular, the fourth generation Imperial Tree is not something you can buy for a lot of money, so just owning it is a tremendous status. Of course, since it is a product of over-technology, there are no people on Earth who can afford it, and at this stage, even if we were to give away everything on Earth, it would not even be “equivalent.” In other words, Shou has become a super-duper millionaire. However, selling it is prohibited.

The “Paradise War” has come to an end in this volume, but the adventures of Kukuma Shou and his friends continue. Even though the Earth Alliance nation has been established, it is a country that has not yet established a system, so there will be various things in the future, and the procedures at the Galactic Federation are yet to come. The settlement with the heroines is also ... ... Well, this is Kajishima's work, so it's something like “you should know it.” Kukoma Shou and his companions will live a laid-back life on Banjō Island, although there will be a lot of slapstick in the future. After all, there is a completely self-sufficient colony ship that includes a certain amount of sea area on a large island. ──It's just a “paradise”.

Kajishima Masaki